

High Times

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COMMUNAL LIVING

-OR HOW
YA GONNA
KEEP EM
DOWN ON
THE FARM?



Special Issue

For athlete's foot, amputate the toes.

With this, the first issue of High Times for 72, we launch ourselves off on yet another New Direction.

Barely have we/you recovered from our/its transformation from *Revolution* and here we are romping fearlessly into new grounds.

All we are doing is devoting whole issues to a topic to our minds more worthwhile than the traditional mish-mash of random news items, more-or-less random articles, graphics, contributors' raves and rip-offs from other non-establishment papers.

Our concern in this issue is communal living and communes. The basis of most articles herein was a weekend conference on the subject held in the mountains near Melbourne recently (see Chris Hector's Introduction).

Many of the monumental problems with which High Times and its contributors have grappled in past issues leave the reader with the uneasy feeling that more has been asked than answered. Such is the nature of intellectual enquiry, your fireside liberal might say. A more productive comment would be, such is the nature of this society, a society in which the fundamental assumption is so unreasonable that almost any problem, taken in isolation, appears unsolvable. Abstract contemplation of this dilemma must lead us to question whether the fundamentally uncharitable assumptions about Man that underlie our culture are the result of an evolution from one state of ignorance through another with the overall ignorance as root cause of the problem, or whether our nasty and brutish existence stems from the inherently nasty and brutish nature of Man. The liberal accepts the doctrine of Man as a fallen creature, of human nature as perverse and irredeemably sick. The revolutionary should see the vast unexplored possibilities of the human mind, body, and of the species.

To explore the unexplored or forgotten possibilities of human interaction is what communal living, consciously or unconsciously, sets out to do.

While most of the world's research and development enterprise is spent on the military and technological fantasies of a terrifyingly misguided generation, a few people are trying to save the earth.

Recycle this issue of High Times — to long-forgotten relatives, to your parents, bosses, teachers and everyone else who doesn't know, or doesn't want to hear.

— Phillip Frazer



COMMUNES AND COMMUNAL LIVING



introduction

"I know you're doing it, but don't tell me..."



Three of us. One Wednesday night sitting round a table full of drinks. Raving about communes. The hassles and the highs. Three things we are agreed upon: one, that if there is an alternative, if there is to be some new, more human way of living and relating to each other, it starts out at least with the communal experiment. Two, that all the communal set-ups we'd lived in had eventually fucked-up, self-destructed in a welter of interpersonal warfare. Three, that if a communal set-up was going to work it involved a lot of hard thinking and planning and analysis. That if anything was a sure-fire bummer it was the Let it Be brand of fake mysticism.

Hey presto, what an idea, we'll hit on up to the old Camp Eureka and sit round all weekend talking about communal living. Just a little scene with about twenty of the people we know who are interested.

Somewhere along the way it started to snowball. One small ad. in the *Review* and a deluge of phone calls from all over. Long distance phone calls yet. And suddenly we start to find people who've been thinking, writing, raving and living in communes — all fired up to come along. Our little scene ends up with something like a hundred people. But what a scene. One hundred people all assembled together to discuss communal living

just have to be nice to each other. Everybody pitched in. Chopping vegies, slicing meat, fetching wood, getting water, and more than that, talking to each other, going up to strangers and initiating conversations, and best of all there's no feeling that if the other person doesn't agree with everything you say, anything has been lost. Everybody is quite happy to accept the fact of a diversity of approaches to the whole problem of communal living. And there were a whole stack of different attitudes.

Enough of the rave about how the weekend got started. Most of the articles in this issue of *High Times* came out of the weekend and they're here to read.

Like I said, all the communal set-ups I've lived in ended up in a mess. The first hang-up seems to be just who does what around the house. Trivial yeah, but certainly not unimportant. I think most of the hassles in most of the houses I've lived in have been about who does the washing up, who cleans the floor, who keeps the bog clean. I really don't know how this one gets solved. The first thing that has to be recognized is that it doesn't matter how groovy the guy is, how well you get on with him when you're drinking or smoking or making music or raving it doesn't

mean that you'll be able to share a house with him (or her).

Some people just don't notice dirt, slime and general untidiness. I mean they just don't see it. Me I just can't handle it. I can't sit happily in a kitchen that is not neat clean and tidy (anyone who happens to read this who's had the misfortune to have shared a scene with me before I became so obsessively anal retentive may indulge a wry smile). In the future communal utopia it seems that some sort of division between the grubs and the uptights will still be necessary.

But this sort of problem can be resolved. Eventually a balance of personality types emerges. Then problem number two. The inability to deal openly with the minor personality hassles that emerge in any kind of communal set-up. Lots of little things that if they were brought out into the open could be discussed and resolved. But they're not. I don't know how many times the woman I've been living with has come up to me and bitched about someone else in the house. A bitch that is not brought into the open, that festers and builds up until too late. Until it bursts out into the open and by this time it is no longer just a minor bitch it's a total personality confrontation. I'm not sure again how you get around the

problem. Phillip Frazer laid a rave on me the other night that might be useful.

Somewhere in Malaysia there's a tribe that every morning sits around and recalls their dreams of the night before. If in any of these dreams one of the members of the tribe commits any kind of anti-social aggressive act against any other member of the tribe he must make amends, be extra nice to this other person. It seems an almost perfect way of defusing potential inter-group conflicts — and as the rave goes, it is one of the most together group of people in the world.

It's not our solution. Most of us repress our dreams. Most of us are not prepared to bring them into the open if we could. Even if we did I am not sure it would be a good idea. Most of us have so many nasties floating round in the murky depths of our unconscious that naked honesty would probably wither the bud of potential group honesty before it has a chance to flower. I suspect that any attempts to open the group out, to create a greater degree of inter-personal freedom, need to be treated with the care accorded the average live explosive. What we are attempting to do is create a whole new personality type. Right from birth we've been indoctrinated and trained into the possessive restricted and aggressive mold of the nuclear family. Openness, honesty, love, unselfishness the whole bit we're aiming at, have all been positively discouraged in the process of our socialization. And what's more most of this indoctrination process has been carried out before we had the capacity to reason out whether we were prepared to accept or reject the shit that was being fed into our heads. If we are to tinker round with these conflicting tendencies within ourselves it should be strictly controlled — at least in the beginning.

The ideal situation would be to have any group therapy attempts supervised by a trained and sympatico psychologist. What a heavy you say? What kind of shit is this — that we should *control* and *routinise* the free development of our spontaneous loving selves? The problem is, I can't see any alternative. Most of our basic

responses are nasty, brutish and destructive. We are sick and the recognition of our sickness is no guarantee of a cure. If we are going to be cured we need help at least to get over the initial hangups.

Problem three and that's really the nitty gritty. Sex rears its ugly (?) head. One of the incredible things about the week-end at Camp Eureka was that no-one really faced up to the problem of the sexual relationships in the group, at least in any of the group discussion sessions. Not that I blame anyone, I've got problems of my own, but like it or not something's got to be resolved and before it becomes crushingly necessary — when it does come into the open once again it is probably totally unmanageable.

It seems to me that as the communal situation becomes more successful it becomes potentially more explosive. Once you've got over the problems of who does the dishes, how loud the sound system churns it out, in fact once the group begins to function as a successful group then we get the real hassle. Most people moving into a communal situation tend towards a monogamous situation. Either they come into the group as part of a pair or within the group they pair off. As the relations within the group become more meaningful this monogamous set-up is no longer adequate. Fucking is the natural development of any real intimacy — if we really are to open out our relationships to encompass more than a restrictive twosome we run straight into all the hangups we have about possessiveness, sexual jealousy all those things that we pretend don't matter.

Our basic problem is that intellectually we may be free liberated tolerant and un-hung-up — our emotions lag behind, way behind. Like goldfish peering out our bowl we see a possibility of freedom. We all know that monogamy is absurd. We all know that possessiveness is a bourgeois hang-over . . . try telling it to my id.

What I do know is that the brutal honesty kick is just not on as far as I'm concerned. I've been through the "darling since we're such rational liberated individuals and our

relationship must not be tainted with blight of dishonesty I must tell you that I fucked X at 3.30 pm today". Shriek, trauma, three days absolute hell. The trouble is that the words are not necessarily received as they were sent. "I fucked . . ." can mean something absolutely different in terms of emotional effect, that the reality of what occurred can be so totally different, that it is *not honest* to make the original statement.

That sort of "brutal honest" approach can be so emotionally destructive that a total retreat into a mutually agreed hypocrisy becomes inevitable. That "darling I know you're fucking but don't you tell me about it and I won't tell you" routine. Which is fine as long as our extra-monogamous sexual athletics remain alienated, trivial and basically meaningless. Just a little ego trip to prove that you've still got it in you. A sexually-sated goldfish but the bowl is really no larger.

I didn't have any answers for the trivia. The nitty gritty really is a bummer — so far as I'm concerned. There may be people all over Australia who have happily resolved their group sexual relations. If they have I'd dig a letter from them telling me just how they did it. What does seem obvious to me is that any sort of arbitrary restriction is just not on. You can make up all sorts of rules about who does the dishes and since they are essentially irrelevant they don't really matter, their only test is their effectiveness.

But what to do in a situation in which the entire aim of the enterprise of group-living runs slap bang into the deepest, murkiest, strongest-held hangups that made necessary the exercise of group living in the first place, it may be that the only possible answer is also impossible. It may be that if we take it slow and easy. Build up in stages, control the gambits in the preliminaries, that maybe a solution can be found. But to do that you have to sit down in the first place and work out the parameters. Just what kind of set-up you are aiming for: and that takes a lot of guts. I really don't know if I'm up to it . . .

— Chris Hector



WHY TRIBE?

by GARY SNYDER
from Earth Household

We use the term Tribe because it suggests the type of new society now emerging within the industrial nations. In America of course the word has associations with the American Indians, which we like. This new subculture is in fact more similar to that ancient and successful tribe, the European Gypsies — A group without nation or territory which maintains its own values, its language and religion, no matter what country it may be in.

The Tribe proposes a totally different style: based on community houses, villages and ashrams; tribe-run farms or workshops or companies; large open families; pilgrimages and wanderings from center to center. A synthesis of Gandhian "village anarchism" and I.W.W. syndicalism. Interesting visionary pamphlets along these lines were written several years ago by Gandhians Richard Gregg and Appa Patwardhan. The Tribe

proposes personal responsibilities rather than abstract centralized government, taxes and 'advertising agency plus Mafia' type international brainwashing corporations.

In the United States and Europe the Tribe has evolved gradually over the last fifty years — since the end of World War I — in response to the increasing insanity of the modern nations. As the number of alienated intellectuals, creative types and general social misfits grew, they came to recognize each other by various minute signals. Much of this energy was channeled into Communism in the thirties and early forties. All the anarchists and left-deviationists — and many Trotskyites — were tribesmen at heart. After World War II, another generation looked at Communist rhetoric with a fresh eye and saw that within the Communist governments (and states of mind) there are too many of the same things as are wrong with "capitalism" — too much anger and murder. The suspicion grew that perhaps the whole Western

Tradition, of which Marxism is but a (Millennial Protestant) part, is off the track. This led many people to study other major civilizations — India and China — to see what they could learn.

It's an easy step from the dialectic of Marx and Hegel to an interest in the dialectic of early Taoism, The I Ching, and the yin-yang theories. From Taoism it is another easy step to the philosophies and mythologies of India — vast, touching the deepest areas of the mind, and with a view of the ultimate nature of the universe which is almost identical with the most sophisticated thought in modern physics — that truth, whatever it is, which is called "The Dharma".

Next comes a concern with deepening one's understanding in an experimental way: abstract philosophical understanding is simply not enough. At this point many, myself included, found in the Buddha-Dharma a practical method for clearing one's mind of the trivia, prejudices and false values that out conditioning had laid on us — and more important, an approach to the basic problem of how to penetrate to the deepest non-self Self. Today we have many who are exploring the Ways of Zen, Vajrayana, Yoga, Shamanism, Psychedelics. The Buddha-Dharma is a long, gentle, human dialog — 2,500 years of quiet conversation — on the nature of human nature and the eternal Dharma — and practical methods of realization.

In the course of these studies it became evident that the "truth" in Buddhism and Hinduism is not dependent in any sense on Indian or Chinese culture; and that "India" and "China" — as societies — are as burdensome to human beings as any others; perhaps more so. It became clear that "Hinduism" and "Buddhism" as social institutions had long been accomplices of the State in burdening and binding people, rather than serving to liberate them. Just like the other Great Religions.

At this point, looking once more quite closely at history both East and West, some of us noticed the similarities in certain small but influential heretical and esoteric movements. These schools of thought and practice were usually suppressed, or diluted and made harmless, in whatever society they appeared. Peasant witchcraft in Europe, Tantrism in Bangal, Quakers in England, Tachikawa-ryu in Japan, Ch'an in China. These are all outcroppings of the Great Subculture which runs underground all through history. This is the tradition that runs without break from Paleo-Siberian Shamanism and Magdalenian cave-painting; through megaliths and Mysters, astronomers, ritualists, alchemists and Albigenians; gnostics and vagantes, right down to Golden Gate Park.

The Great Subculture has been attached in part to the official religions but is different in that it transmits a community style of life, with an ecstatically positive vision of spiritual and physical love; and is opposed for very fundamental reasons to the Civilization Establishment.

It has taught that man's natural being is to be trusted and followed; that we need not look to a model

or rule imposed from outside in searching for the centre; and that in following the grain, one is being truly "moral". It has recognized that for one to "follow the grain" it is necessary to look exhaustively into the negative and demonic potentials of the Unconscious, and by recognizing these powers — symbolically acting them out — one releases himself from these forces. By this profound exorcism and ritual drama, the Great Subculture destroys the one credible claim of Church and State to a necessary function.

All this is subversive to civilization: for civilization is built on hierarchy and specialization. A ruling class, to survive, must propose a Law: a law to work must have a hook into the social psyche — and the most effective way to achieve this is to make people doubt their natural worth and instincts, especially sexual. To make "human nature" suspect is also to make Nature — the wilderness — the adversary. Hence the ecological crisis of today.

We came, therefore, (and with many Western thinkers before us) to suspect that civilization may be overvalued. Before anyone says "This is ridiculous, we all know civilization is a necessary thing", let him read some cultural anthropology. Take a look at the lives of South African Bushmen. Micronesian navigators, the Indians of California; the reseraches of Claude Levi-Strauss. Everything we have thought about man's welfare needs to be rethought. The tribe, it seems, is the newest development in the Great Subculture. We have almost unintentionally linked ourselves to a transmission of gnosis, a potential social order, and techniques of enlightenment, surviving from prehistoric times.

The most advanced developments of modern science and technology have come to support some of these views. Consequently the modern Tribesman, rather than being old-fashioned in his criticism of civilization, is the most relevant type in contemporary society. Nationalism, warfare, heavy industry and consumerism, are already outdated and useless. The next great step of mankind is to step into the nature of his own mind — the real question is "just what is consciousness?" — and we must make the most intelligent and creative use of science in exploring these questions. The man of wide international experience, much learning and leisure — luxurious product of our long and sophisticated history — may with good reason wish to live simply, with few tools and minimal clothes, close to nature.

The Revolution has ceased to be an ideological concern. Instead, people are trying it out right now — communism in small communities, new family organization. A million people in America and another million in England and Europe. A vast underground in Russia, which will come out in the open four or five years hence, is now biding. How do they recognize each other? Not always by beards, long hair, bare feet or beads. The signal is a bright and tender look; calmness and gentleness, freshness and ease of manner. Men, women and children — all of whom together hope to follow the timeless path of love and wisdom, in affectionate company with the sky, winds, clouds, trees, waters, animals and grasses — this is the tribe.

View from a sociologist

Communes as liberated zones



BY PETER COCK

From the point of view of boredom, community living, especially if it exists within an egalitarian framework, gives greater possibility for role diversity and exchange. It can reduce the increasing specialization of tasks and responsibilities through sharing, thus removing the drudgery of continuous forced domesticity. In fact, by removing the compulsory repetitiveness of tasks it enhances their pleasurable content.

This has advantages for children as well as parents, for by diversifying child care, the parent, in particular the mother, is freed not only to become involved in other interests, but is enabled to enjoy her chosen moments with her child. As for the child, community affords him a variety of peers as well as a diversity of adult figures. He is not confined to two parent figures, but has a variety of stimulus and intimacy with a number of adults. His personal life is experienced and developed within a community context, which helps him to deal more effectively with the reality of his future world, of school and work.

One person cannot hope to be able to fulfil all the needs of another, and/or solve all his problems. A community provides this possibility, our needs and interests being satisfied and developed by a variety of persons without the frustration of only partial fulfilment by one person. This frees each individual from the continuous demands of the other for total satisfaction. Further, a community can provide a source of support and strength in time of need, such as sickness, loss of a mate, and other personal crises. Such a crisis would not have the drastic consequences upon others as in the family situation. As a consequence each individual is freed from the total responsibility for community survival.

Socio-cultural contributions of community living.

In contrast to the competitive materialism of the present socio-cultural system, community living aids the development of an experienced humanistic value system, of co-operative, sharing, altruistic relationships.

It is from the context of the

breakdown of the nuclear family that communal living needs to be viewed. In a more general sense as a search for an alternative to the dehumanizing experience of existing under the dictates of a corporate state.

Contemporary communal living needs to be seen within the context of the existing structure of society and as part of a wider movement motivated by humanistic aspirations to create an alternative society. These aspirations derive from a humanistic value system which involves:

- a commitment to persons as ends in themselves,
- a commitment to mankind as a whole (an international consciousness),
- a concern with the totality of the individual — his emotions, intellect, body, mind and spirit (humanistic education).
- concern with the development of the qualities of love, sensitivity, perception, listening, reflection and insight. In short, with self-development and discovery. All Power to the Person — a quality of the person (yoga, humanistic psychology).

— a concern with meaningfully, developmentally and cooperatively working with and relating to others — to develop a quality and depth of relationships (T-groups).

— a commitment to working with nature (ecology).

— a concern with life forces beyond our worldly experience — (personal transcendence, Eastern religions).

In short, a humanistic value system is concerned with self-actualization. The nature of this concern leads to the focus upon the human and natural world rather than the man made materialistic world of the corporate state.

Historically, such a value system has been left to a few Utopian philosophers and intellectuals. The question now is, is there likely to be a developing collectivist concern with this value system and its realization and expression in concrete terms. Particularly, can communal living offer such a concrete expression?

Such an effort, such a movement, is the beginning of what one writer calls the Long Revolution, and another, the Slow Revolution. Nevertheless, an alternative is developing, is in the process of becoming, an alternative that is contradictory to the present corporate state. What is evolving is a developing counter social system that enables a more humanistic man to be called forth, maintained and developed: a system that focusses on primary groups, informal groups with openness and flexibility. Effort is focussed on the achievement of Reich's Consciousness III, to get in touch with oneself, to find one's own humanness, to be able to meet the other in I-Thou relationships. In short, to be able to discover and develop those human capacities and relationships brutalized, suppressed and corrupted by the dictates of the corporate state.

In Australia, in Melbourne, Such efforts are in their beginning stages. The superficial symbols of the counter-culture are widespread — its clothing, music, and language. The focus on the natural world is revealing itself not only in the increasing number of ecology groups but in the increasing popularity of healthfood stores. In Carlton there is a health

food restaurant; organic farms are being fostered under the guidance of the Biodynamic Association of Victoria. As you probably know, in terms of the media we have the student newspapers and newsheets, *Link-Up*, *High Times*, and you might include the *Review*, backed by the Third World and Source bookshops.

Then there are the several coffeehouses such as the Outpost Inn and theatre groups such as La Mama and the Pram Factory. There are several organizations deliberately constructed to facilitate the humanistic perspectives such as the Cairn Miller Institute, the Australian Institute of Human Relations, the Helen Vale Foundation, the Yoga Education Centre, the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

There is movement within the churches and within education towards humanization: we have the Jesus movement, and the secularization movement, Christ as the ideal humanistic man. In education, there are not only efforts at humanistic reform but also schools deliberately created on the philosophy that education is for self-development (such as ERA and Preshill). They see education as a facilitator of the development and achievement of the humanistic aspiration. Women's Liberation and Men's Liberation are efforts to be seen as a person, to become a total human being unrestricted by the dictates of sex-role differentiation. Communal living is but one expression of such a movement, although it can be seen as a core social unit of the alternative society.

A revolution is in the process of evolution, with a shift of the centre of attention away from the struggle to exist to the struggle to live. More specifically the focus has shifted from the making, acquiring, and consuming of things to the discovery, fostering and developing of human relationships. We are passing from a civilization of objects to a civilization of interacting persons, a civilization that gives power to the person, power to stand against the dehumanizing pressures of the corporate state, power to choose to feel and experience as

well as to have a developed consciousness and rationality, power to be as well as to become, power to give and love as well as to produce and consume.

But how does one develop such capabilities? T-groups, sensitivity groups, verbal and non verbal, have been one attempt to find a method, a structure for relationships through which the individual can develop and express a humanistic value system. However, such methods are artificial and contrived, momentarily real and beneficial, but meaningless and powerless when the person finds himself back within the dictates of the corporate state and more specifically within his own particular home environment.

The individual person is left with but a conception, an experience, of what can be, could be, that such idealism can at least for a moment be real. But he is powerless to continuously experience it. So to it may be for those hip to mind-expanding drugs, who via them are able to experience a newer beautiful world but can't maintain it. So they are continuously high, but knowing that it is a high rather than an inner developed permanent capability.

The question then becomes, can we continuously, normally and naturally create an environment within which, instead of a momentary experience, create an ongoing capability? Does communal living offer such a prospect? What are its advantages? What does it offer the individual? How can it concretely express the humanistic value system? Yablonski, in his book, *The Hippie Trip* says the purpose of communal living is to create a situation where adults and children can live more intimately and humanely in a cohesive, face to face primary group, a more cohesive, emotionally closer fundamental human unit living in a more natural state, and where the program is the discovery of our true selves and the need for new relationships. As the *Commune Journal* states, "the only morality is to experience and create contentment for all of us".

I will now go on to consider the advantages of communal living.

Communal living, communities or co-operatives are the potential core social unit of a developing counter culture, as a counter to the isolated nuclear family and to the alienation and dehumanization experienced within our existing culture. By communal living I mean the experience of continuous, meaningful, interpersonal relationships with a group of chosen and committed people, each caring for and sharing with all. The following deals with some of the advantages of such an experience.

Intro-personal and Inter-personal Benefits

When we invest ourselves intensely and authentically, risking ourselves to bridge the gap between ourselves and the other, we make possible our mutual enhancement and development, into more humane individuals. Continuous living with chosen individuals increases this possibility. Further, communal living affords the individual the opportunity of strengthening his personal identity, self-acceptance, confidence, and sense of security. And the possibility of being able to transform oneself with help from communal brothers.

Educationally, communal living can provide an alternative educational environment where learning is continuous and plugged into the child's needs and interests in the context of his or her own evolved environment. Learning is not abstracted from his way of living.

These seem to have provided a great deal of the stimulus to contemporary interest in communal living.

The sheer increase in the number of persons living together multiplies the variety of potential relationships. This offers greater stimulus, flexibility, diversity and complexity, the joys of involvement with chosen people, of developing continuous intimate friendships with a variety of persons.

Communal living means that the present total focus on male-female relationships is diffused. Male relationships, female relationships can now be faced at depth, helping to destroy some of our sexual neuroses

and hence enabling the development of intimate relationships between persons. Natural sexual expression developing as a consequence of these relationships.

Political strengths

The combined power of communal purpose and solidarity can act as a protection against threats from the outside world, in particular governmental action against communal living or individuals living in community, especially if a loosely organized federation of communes exists which would support particular communities so threatened.

Communes can provide individual cadres and/or community cells to actively seek the transformation of the mainstream social system in all its areas. A commune by its very vitality acts as an effective barrier to the further spread of unitary, centralized, political and economic power.

On a more positive vein, a commune can be democratic — small enough for participatory democracy viable. If it succeeds in these twin political roles, a commune should become a living prototype of a new society. A liberated area in a world-wide war zone.

Some ecological benefits

By creating a larger consuming unit, a commune in which production is for need not fancy reduces individual consumption needs, thus reducing pollution and the drain on our scarce natural resources.

Further, permanent communal living makes it possible to decrease the number of children per couple, still enabling each adult and child to experience the contribution of children to one's own life. This would reduce population growth and further decrease the destruction of our natural environment, simultaneously facilitating the quest for a focus on the quality of life. In short, community living contributes to the elimination of the ecological crisis in several ways: by reducing scarce resource consumption, decreasing overpopulation and pollution, and hopefully by growing food without destructive or dangerous tools like insecticides, chemical fertilisers or heavy petrol driven

machinery.

Economic advantages

Communities can create a counter economic system in miniature, where economic resources are pooled rather than divided, "each member contributing according to his capacity and receiving according to his needs". This eliminates the competitive nature of capitalistic relationships within the community.

The community can also reduce the stranglehold of the competitive privatized economic system and at the same time offer real economic savings to its members. But how?

(a) By expanding the size of the consuming unit the need for such a large number of consumer items, for example, a frig. and TV is reduced.

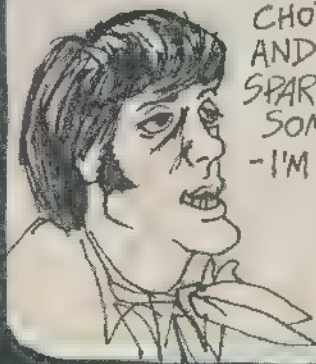
(b) By spreading fixed expenditure over a large number of people, individual fixed costs are reduced, for example, rent and housing.

(c) Purchase costs can be reduced through bulk buying. The community can thus gain the advantages of business organizations, of demanding and obtaining cheaper prices, such as with food purchases, thus increasing the consumers' power over producers.

(d) Like business organizations, community living, due to its size, makes its members less dependent on outside financial (and other) means of support. Members are more able to be self-financed, freeing them from the stranglehold of banks, and in particular of hire purchase companies.

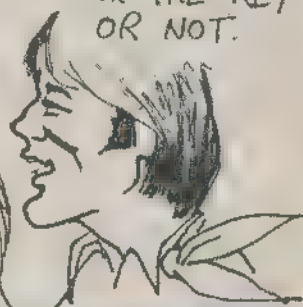
(e) Those seeking access to possessions beyond their individual financial capacity can do so through the collective financial strength of community, purchasing such items as a farm, holiday house or plane. Conversely, those lacking the minimal material-financial resources to buy basic material necessities can do so by pooling their individual meagre resources, those for example who have dropped out and/or who are on social welfare or a pension.

These economic benefits reduce the individual's need to meaninglessly labor in order to earn the income to buy basic goods. Hence the strain upon the individual in community is reduced. He is freer to become more



HEY, DAD -
I WANT THE
KEY TO THE
CHOPPER...
AND CAN YOU
SPARE ME
SOME BREAD
- I'M BUSTED?

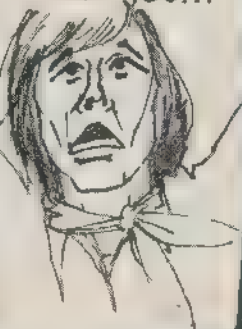
NOW LISTEN, SON,
IT'S ABOUT TIME
WE HAD A TALK
ABOUT THE
LACK OF
COMMUNICATION
THAT WE --



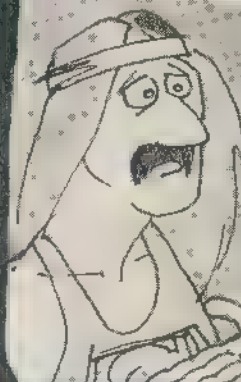
C'MON OFF THE
HEAVIES MAN -
EITHER YOUR
GOING TO GIVE
WITH THE KEY
OR NOT.

LISTEN, DON'T THINK
THAT I DIDN'T HAVE
THE SAME SCENE
WITH MY PARENTS...
IT WAS SO UNCOOL
UNTIL I LEARNED -

STOP THE
HASSLING
WITH CHILD
PSYCHOLOGY
WILL YOU...

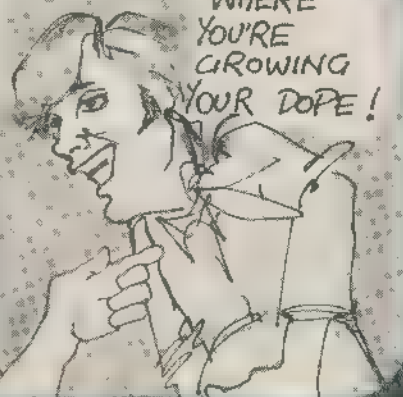


...I KNOW YOU'RE
GOING TO GIVE THAT
DARN KEY ANYWAY.

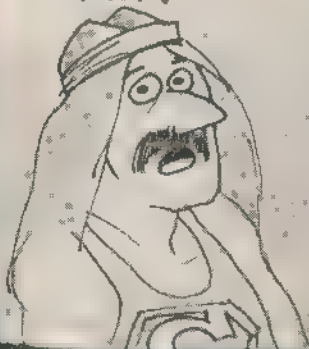


... NOW HOLD IT
A MINUTE - WHAT
MAKES YOU SO
SURE ABOUT
THAT?

I KNOW
WHERE
YOU'RE
GROWING
YOUR DOPE!



I'LL BE GLAD WHEN
THIS REVOLUTION
IS WON!



JOE BLANEY

involved with nature, his fellows and himself, and if he wishes to still live at the same 'standard of living'.

Our economic system has a vested interest in decreasing rather than increasing the size of the consuming unit. Community living, through the above benefits, is able to use the economic system against itself, by undercutting it through economies of scale and eating at it by decreasing the number of consuming units and the move toward a decentralised deurbanised economy.

Although I believe these advantages of community living are real, they constitute no guarantee of success. Community living can offer a meaningful alternative. It does not offer an easy way to drop out on life, but a possible way to make it worth living.

I view the possibilities available with optimism. However I recognize that they may never be realized and that death is a real reality and possibility. However I affirm that my life now and in the future is dependent upon working for the realization of the positive future. Idealism has to become the new reality, the new realism, or else it will be Orwell's 1984 and/or we shall all perish!

DISCUSSION AFTER PETER COCK'S TALK

Cock: If you want to develop intimacy within a group of people the ideal size is eight or fifteen ... not three to four definitely. You just look at your own experience, you wear out, you get bored, you get sick of it, you want some new stimulus.

Questioner: A lot of this comes from the wider family idea. The nuclear family's a product of very recent western capitalism ... families in India are just tremendous in that they have such large numbers of brothers and wives and sisters all coming together and you get a whole child-grandparent range and they don't get in each other's hair. I lived with an Indian family and there was a fantastic interaction because they kept breaking up into quite different groups within the household and

there was very little tension. That was a family of about twelve.

Hector: When you say that the breakdown of family is the product of corporation or post-capitalist society — if we're accepting that kind of marxist analysis of social relationships, we have to explain why it is that there are so many people sitting here talking about communal living. Is there some kind of structural change within the society that's creating this retribalisation, and if so what is it?

Cock: I wouldn't go to a structural explanation, rather a psychological one. Man needs to exist in a primary group to actualise his potential. I'd read Maalau — Towards a Psychology of Being.

Hector: Even if we accept that the nuclear family's a relatively recent innovation — 1850?

Cock: Twentieth century

Hector: Even the twentieth century — it's been going for x generations and it's only this last generation that there's been any wide spread (counter) movement. If you're saying there's a constant factor of a psychological need that still doesn't explain why there's a communalist movement in 1970 or 1960 whereas there wasn't in 1930

Cock: Yes the time factor's crucial and I'd say the question of affluence comes in here in terms of the saturation of our material needs, you look at who's involved in communal affairs, it's all middle-class and upper-class. They've got their economic security which is sufficient to say "OK, my existence is secure I want to make it meaningful." While the workers are still living largely in stable neighbourhoods, parents are often next door. It's only very recently we've reached the cream of affluence, and we're only just reaching it here which is why this movement's in the beginning stage.

In fact it's security plus the psychological need for more than the small family scene can offer. Some people argue that it's the changing interaction pattern within the family itself — more egalitarian,

more democratic ... the Spock thing. But that seems to me a limited explanation.

Hector: For the first time we've got a structure of the work force where people can move in and out of the system, and that there are jobs available now that mean that you can go along and earn enough bread to keep a communal system going. These are jobs that allow people to rip off the system and enable them to live in an essentially anti system way

Interjection: That's fine if you're only going to have a few communes.

Hector: It's a crucial question whether this is in fact how they're existing — on the periphery of an ongoing capitalist system, and whether it's ever going to include more than people who can get sinicures at university or people who can dash off the occasional article or something. The crucial question is to create an economic base for a communal society.

Questioner: In view of the fact that most of us here have a low level of aspiration, economically, no-one wants to be a managing director, who'd do the work if the communalists were universal?

You have to have the choice — not a whole society of communes, but so there is a choice between the nuclear family and a commune.

Cock: You'll always have nuclear families — even inside a communal set-up you could. But I agree that the economic question is vital, and many people in communities cop out on it. They can afford to cop out on it because they can live off the system. But given that we're going to have to halve our industrial production to survive (At least man.), and considering automation, cybernation, technology may provide some of the prerequisites for improvement that we need, even though we may not be into technology ourselves. We could halve our work force today, just about, and still produce the same amount of goods ... the necessary goods. We may not be able to produce an electric toothbrush or a

new car every year, but we could produce what's necessary without significantly affecting our standard of living.

Interjection: People would have a highly varied idea of what's necessary.

Hector: Yean — but the people who have other values can go out and make the things they think are necessary. The people

Cock: However, the point remains that we can't feed this world population without technology. We cannot survive, physically, without it. Therefore we've got to develop technology that's sufficiently flexible to enable decentralisation, or at least a centralisation that doesn't mean that we, the people, have to be centralised.

Cosmic Cowboy: There's no doubt we have to separate income from employment in order to change the system because this is the way they tie the workers in by the balls ... they're going to be anti anything that's going to stop big business because they'll lose their jobs, and why do they worry about their jobs, because they'll lose their income ... unless we've got a guaranteed income that's separate from whether you work or not...

Hector: What we have to use is the technology that we've got intelligently, which is what we're not doing. America's got the most complex technology around yet they've got twenty percent of their people living on the poverty level. It's not this kind of Luddite thing that the communal people have of, "Let's scrap technology and go back to rough hewn chairs and beating out own flour with a mortar and pestel ...". The fact that this society has the capacity to support everyone without anyone having to be forced to any unpleasant work ... this is our strength, that we can use the technology to scrap work. Not scrap technology, but leave it do its own thing.

Interjection: Sure, most of the guys in factories can be replaced. But to run the businesses and maintain a complex technology requires highly skilled people who've devoted their entire lives to this work. If you have them entering communes now we'll lose them!

Memblor: But the people who do it all their lives do it because they groove on it, and they'll always be there...

Cock: And a lot of them do it for the status and the dough don't forget...

Unknown Soldier: But those people aren't going to be the most successful at it.

Communicator: What kind of society do you think we're living in? You're worried about who's going to run technology. I'm concerned with who's going to start communes.



who are really hung up on electric toothbrushes could set up their own little factory for electric toothbrushes

Interjection: What you're saying is what was said earlier — there must continue to co-exist, the two systems.

Hector: No — the society as a whole may decide it doesn't want electric toothbrushes or fifty different shapes of car ..

Hector: Yes, if you automate you central production you don't need to have people involved in them ... the problem with the capitalist system is that it can't use automation properly, because it's all tied up with people having to work and get money out ... you can't completely cybernate the work process because how do you continue to pay the guy for something he's no longer doing?

Transcript of Dave
Potts' talk at Camp Eureka

Recollections of an itinerant communard

I'm going to talk about the communes I saw in California. Some of the things that went right and some of the things that went wrong. I was only there for six weeks and during then tried to hunt up a number of communities. I went to two communities and collected a number of reports on them and I met a bloke called Ben Serblocki who's been doing a study on them for six years and he let me go through all his files and I traveled around a bit with an old bloke called Calvino de Phillips who was about seventy. He'd been on communes for about twenty years and he was a very lovely sort of bloke . . . able to tell me a lot about what had happened on communes.

Just to get off the romantic touch a bit I'll read a few letters about Sunrise Hill community. This bloke's writing to Serblocki - he says, "I never thought I would have to leave here short of when the commune might get busted someday." This was a typical



farming community where they're doing a little bit of farming, living off other sources — about fifteen people in a farm house, a few hundred acres. "I never thought I'd have to leave here short of the commune getting busted some day but lately I've been thinking of it more and more and the really sad thing is that such thoughts come to me as a sort of freedom, jail break comes to a prisoner with joy and a feeling of release.

"Ever since I came here in September I've been working harder than I've ever worked before in my life. My artwork has become a fiction. I've done none to speak of. My peace of mind, always a tenuous thing, is now nothing more than a concept, certainly no reality."

He speaks about going to work and then coming home. "There's the same disorganisation, the same undoneness, of things needing doing. And the same constant interpersonal feuds and tensions. It's simply too fucking much. How can a human being live like this?"

Another one from Selma to Ben in November '66:

"I want to start this letter in a way I guess you are never supposed to start anything. The fact is I am about at the end of my rope. The morning began for me by rising from a very pleasant sleep taking a few steps from my room to the main room completely shedding the lovely feeling I woke with and heaving shouts furniture pans anything available at Bryce. The fact is he's driving everyone crazy, me a little faster than the others."

These are some of the things that are problems and I just want to set up that general atmosphere.

When I got to the States I didn't know anyone. I didn't know where the communities were and I walked up to a bloke with a beard and I said "Look do you know where there's a commune?" And he said he knew somebody and to ring Susan so I rang Susan and she said she hadn't been on a commune for two years. She'd been in a place where they shared everything and

they kept pinching her boots before she got up in the morning — but ring this bloke Ben Serblocki, and he said "Oh yeah come round, you can stay at our place".

I went round and there was him and two girls and old Calvino de Phillips, all naked — having breakfast and I talked to them a bit and they said come up to a community with us.

I spent that night there and there were all sorts of people coming in and out of this house, and they showed me a bed with a woman in it and said you sleep there, and she told me she'd come up from a commune because she'd got VD and she was getting treatment.

The next morning I went up with Calvino de Phillips and a couple of girls to a community called the Hard Gravy Paradise Hotel and that was a very typical type of commune. There were about four families there, there were about eight kids and there were about four young girls who had come up fairly recently. It was run by a bloke in his late twenties who'd had a busted marriage and he was living with his girlfriend — they had a couple of kids, his name was Peter Coyote.

These girls he called "city chicks".

One of the first things I want to get on to here, one of the big problems of these communities is just finding a balance of people. Even if you live in a house in Carlton how do you get the number of people you want and the balance and Peter Coyote was saying time and again sometimes they had really good things going but the group was never stable, he couldn't keep them together and this was a constant problem. He had these four girls who'd come up because they'd all had busted love lives and he thought they were putting nothing into the community — they were just trying to get a stable base and they'd shunt on. He had another couple who were just getting stabilised before they went up into the Californian woods to live in a caravan.

All sorts of other things operate to keep breaking up the group.

A bloke may have to do a draft resisting dodge and belt the hell out of it. People run out of money and eventually they have to get work and they can't get it in the local area, and every time someone comes a whole new balance has to be set up. Who'll do what sort of work, why and how if it's not going to be too formal there has to be a balance and that takes a long time to create. Even if somebody goes, again there was something that they did that no-one else is doing, the whole balance shifts and shunts and that's one of the constant problems about communities.

There is a report I've got here on Cold Mountain farm, this is really traumatic stuff, about a good group of anarchists living together. A lawyer and his two kids and wife came up and lived with them and the kids were apparently impossible. They were howling and screaming and getting in everyone's hair, fighting with the other children. And that was what broke up the whole community. And so a lot of communities go in for quite rigorous ways of selecting people coming into the community. For instance they stay for a month and then meetings are held and they make decisions but even then this still creates constant problems because people must leave.

The problem about a community is that in a nuclear family you can go to a new area for a new job — you shift the whole family but you can't shift fifteen people like that.

Modern western society offers really beautiful things for moving around for going overseas different countries and things. It's crazy just to stay in one spot but if you're in a larger family and you move you lose the things you had in the larger family. I don't know how communities will overcome that. I think they must almost inevitably be fairly short term things — three five years at the most. People shouldn't be worried about communities busting up.

The big problem with communes in the United States, and there are constant articles about this in community magazines, are basic domestic duties. People will work very readily on big dramatic jobs. Ploughing the whole fields for winter, building a new house, even fencing jobs, but they won't do the maintenance work.

Peter Coyote took me out to his vegetable patch that had been gloriously planted with a great deal of activity and it was just a great mass of weeds everywhere. Nobody would get down and weed. When I was there his woman Sam said to me, I'd been trudging around the hills and I was wet through and it was winter, and I said is there a fire going I want to dry out my socks, and she said "No but if you light a fire you'll be right, and I said "Oh it doesn't matter", and she was immediately uptight about the whole thing. And so I said "Look if you want me to light a fire that's alright I wouldn't have done it for myself". And she said "Yes I do. People keep coming into here and they don't do these things and the whole routine is constantly disrupted." She was so uptight about that, she'd been on a commune for some time. She really turned quite nasty when I said I wasn't going to light the fire. Those tensions are constant and communities have to get over that. "Who'll do the dishes?"

Dishwashing is the big community backbreaker.

Whether you think it should be or not, that's where the problem's at. It's the handling of the kitchen, and women constantly say they'd like a kitchen of their own. Some places develop schemes. For instance Twin Oaks community has a credit scheme, it's worked out in relation to people's natural impulses, if everybody wants to do the ploughing you get two points for ten hours ploughing, if no-one wants to do the dishes you get ten points for half an hour dishwashing. They just keep loading up the points so that you even have to take minus points if you want to do

the ploughing. So if you want to do the ploughing you just have to do the dishes to compensate for doing the ploughing

They had a meeting and agreed that everyone had to build up twenty credits a week. So quite complicated systems are quite often worked out. And then you get the anarchist who says hell that's not what I came here for. You get very sad letters in the newspapers saying "Well I went on a community for freedom and now I've got much less freedom than I ever had."

The only communities that work are those on a rigid discipline or religious communities with very strong demands, and the only way to be free is to be alone.

If you're an anarchist you might have to face up to that community living is not quite that kind of deal, it's not being free they seem to have to work out these balances. Lots of places have meetings whereby they discuss everything week by week and they set up rules, the two places I was on they didn't do it by vote taking everybody had to agree to a rule, finally if somebody didn't agree in principle they'd say, "Well, will you agree in practice, because all the rest of us want it." They had lots of different rules, about no dogs on the community, some had dogs because they thought that was the natural way, balancing natural forces, dogs are natural predators, different theories — quite different rules but coming to rules all the time

One of the other big things is the property deal. And the tremendous importance of having total collective ownership. If you are buying a property the whole property has to be in the group's name, if anybody gets some sort of authority over the others it seems to create all sorts of resentment this bloke Bryce who had the pots and pans thrown at his head, he had a property b.t. he bought the original property, and that created all sorts of problems.

There was one community which was going really well until they had what they called the Great

Chicken Dispute They had a meeting and they were arguing, "Should we have chickens, who's going to build the pen, who's going to clean them out, how are we going to handle the whole experience?" There was so much disagreement, others were saying, "It's wrong to keep chickens in cages, why pinch their eggs you know they're not our eggs?" And eventually people started saying, "I'm not going to give my money to chickens". And that was the first break out and people began to withdraw into their own private property. And that was another community that eventually busted. And then there's the health thing.

Calvino de Phillips is a self-styled health expert on communities and he reckoned a hell of a lot of them were very unhealthy, that they didn't know enough about nutrition, they were feeding themselves the wrong food. They'd tried to go vegetarian without getting proper balances. Infections spread quickly in communities. At the Hargrave Paradise Hotel some woman had a staph infection and it was something in her foot, and she was walking bare foot spreading the thing all over the place, and everyone else was going around bare foot.

Dysentery can go right through a commune.

How can communes sustain themselves? One of the hard facts of American communes is that according to Calvino who's seen many communes over the last twenty years, there's not one American commune that supports itself on food. There's a hell of a lot of intention to do this, there's a hell of a lot of farming going on, but he says there's none actually supporting themselves.

The communes that are actually self-sufficient do it by other forms of production.

Some very big communities like Bruderhof with up to three hundred people, two lots of three hundred people in two interlocking communities, they've been making

wooden toys. They were German craftsmen a lot of them and they came out to the States and that was a thing they developed and with the post-war interest in wooden toys for children they were turning out high quality stuff and the American education system got on to it and they started making a million dollars a year. In point of fact a million dollars is not all that much amongst six hundred people but they did begin to worry about becoming capitalists and they eventually began to stop manufacture

Twin Oaks existed by making string hammocks. Some do art posters and sell those in the city, so they build up a local industry. And so they rely on commercial contact with other communities and with the city itself.

A lot of communities in the States are supported by charity.

Lew Gottlieb the folksinger set up Morning Star ranch. Ken Kesey his big community turn-on things were all financed by the proceeds from his books. Joan Baez has got communities going, so has John Lennon that they finance. That's one way of doing it. At Wheelers ranch, Bill Wheeler inherited a fortune and bought 300 acres... A lot of people seem to have independent capital supplies which suggests that communities are coming mainly from the middle-class post-graduate people.

They bring in their dough. And the older people in their late twenties who set them up then attract younger people who are very lost and those people very often live off the communities. Wheelers ranch runs a free store, they get in bulk food like raw rice and that's just available to anyone.

At the Quaker community, they run a free store, yet they're on a village structure and people live in quite separate houses. and it does seem to work.

My impression of the States, and I haven't seen the same thing in Australia, is that people are really so generous, people are really fantastically generous, a lot of these

people who are making the breakthrough are material contemptuous. They don't give a stuff about money. And that's beautiful, it's really nice.

Sometimes people are on social welfare and that's resented hugely.

One of the big things against communities is the taxpayers who reckon the communities are sponging off them.

A woman with two kids was supporting her man who was the father of the kids but she wasn't married to him so she was a mother without a father, and that got her 150 dollars a month... well that was a lot of money on a community. Food prices are very cheap in the States, much cheaper than here, whereas the actual salaries are much higher so you only have to work for a short time to tide you over for a long time.

And that's mainly how the communes sustain themselves. Charity and that sort of in-and-out-of work.



But the important thing about work of course is that it's what keeps a community together. If work wasn't necessary for man to live he would have had to invent it, because the psyche of being alive is doing things. Self-expression, activity, and some sort of regular demand on you. And this gives you some sort of focus in life. The communities that have a work focus are much much safer. They've got something around which to build and organize.

I'll just give you a quote from one of the letters, Gordon writes. "I feel there must be a program,

(they'd been getting into all sorts of tensions) if the people later wish to alter the program that's another matter, but a program there must be. We should have decided by summer a workable concept of what constitutes membership here and what it is the community as a whole is after."

That sort of collective purpose becomes terribly important. Now a lot of the arguments about that. How do you find collective purpose in a community?

At Cold Mountain farm, for instance, one of the women kept saying — "we've got no shared vision." They started off as anarchists, they were supposed to feed the anarchists in the city, from the collective. Their original ideas were that they'd all have free love and the men would feel that they were sustaining the revolution from the farm, but somehow on the farm the revolution faded away. And they didn't feel they were really fighting anything, when they went out digging or with the plough, and they lost that sense of purpose that they needed.

She wrote that "There was supposed to be fighting for the Revolution and loving, that was the whole thing." But she said the men felt there wasn't enough fighting and the women felt there wasn't enough loving.

Then you get other sorts of plans. Bill Wheeler put out a thing where he said "The commune is a place where you can shuck off the accumulative garbage of a tension ridden existence and just be. You don't have to have a purpose."

"Person after person felt reborn after just a few days living on the land in simple home-made structures. They got happier they laughed and smiled they felt they just belonged and were loved. Not for what they did but just because they were."

And that's what some people are struggling for.

The last thing about the hassles and the problems is just the States

The Easy Rider thing of gunning people down is almost on. In Wheelers ranch they've been shot at from the hills. People coming hundreds of miles, getting up in the hills, and then rushing back to the council saying, "THEY'RE IN THE NUDE, THEY'RE IN THE NUDE, they're exposing themselves in front of us."

They'd get up in their cars and watch.

And then somebody starts shooting at them.

I tried to get into the community and the local farmer wouldn't let me turn my car around in his drive, until he saw I had short hair and eventually decided it was alright. But he was filled with a very bitter hatred. Eventually my car got bogged and I had to bring in an RACV sort of character and all the time he was at me, "What are you doing with those long hair characters, they sponge off us, they're this that and the other, and I said to him "Look they really feel that they are on to something good, life just isn't accumulating property." "Yeah," he said, "I've been twenty years in this garage and I've begun to learn that, but why should they have it that young." He was fantastically bitter against them. He claimed they were stealing and so on, and all the things he claimed about that particular commune just weren't true.

Then the councils come in because the complaints go to the council, and say "Your health standards aren't up to it, you haven't got the required number of switches for that sort of building, your plumbing's wrong fix it up in three months or we bulldoze you and in come the bulldozers. At Wheelers ranch time and again their houses are bulldozed. Or else they get the drug squad in, or they raid them on suspicion there's a draft-dodger there. They're constantly subjected to that sort of harassment, and a large number of communities have actually been closed down on that sort of basis, and I think that would happen in Australia too. When the

communities begin to threaten when they begin to look like a going thing There's some ten thousand people the government recognizes as being on communities there's a hell of a lot more here and there.

What I want to touch on now are what I think are the positive values that seem to be there in the United States

One of the first things is just a beaut atmosphere when I went into Hard Gravy Paradise hotel. People would talk to me when I wanted to talk or they'd just sit and do their own thing, it really was very relaxed living there on that place.

People who don't talk just feel that they belong. One of the girls that I went up with a very lovely girl called Danang, who was tremendously pretty but hung up. Her parents were divorced. She'd left home when she wasn't fourteen. She believed in god and all sorts of things which I didn't understand, that's my hangup I guess . . . anyway once we were in the community it was great . . . she did her own thing, she didn't push in on other people. She'd been in communities since she was very young and she'd found that balance of living I think for a lot of kids that young the hippy philosophy of love is the first real love they've experienced, the older people are conscious of that and they look after the younger people.

One night we were all sitting round the table just talking about things and Danang began to carry on about some sort of spiritual thing and people began to snipe at her a bit, then someone said, "Hey lay off her." And it was "Oh year sorry, look Danang what we really mean . . ."

They have that sense of awareness about what they are doing to each other and that seems to me to be running back into the urban culture too because people are on communes for a while then they come back.

There's the moving around, the fantastic mobility, I slept from house to house all round California without any trouble.

Another thing is some of the stuff written by people on the communities on love of nature themes is really poetic stuff, they are tuning in on nature, one quote from Cold Mountain Farm, this woman writes that on the farm there was "the opportunity to explore this incredible land, to watch the seasons change, to see the snow melt, and the trees begin to push forth their buds, see the birds moving in laying their eggs to spy on the porcupine, to start to get to know one another working and eating together."

In Woodstock that business of sliding in the mud, that's going on everywhere . . . there's a physical sense of living, and being much more natural. Actually when we arrived here yesterday morning there were a couple of girls swimming in the creek — that sort of loosening up of body functions goes on a lot on American communes

The next thing is the actual creative activities that were going on in these places for instance there was a girl there who was an artist this is Hard Gravy Paradise hotel and she'd organized everybody into painting the whole house out in murals.

She was a good artist and she directed others but it was a community activity. Then we had a session one night Peter Coyote had written something on a pop concert he'd been to and he talked to people about that, wrote it up, came out, read it to everyone, asked for criticisms and re-wrote it, so even something that's regarded as private like writing was a community experience.

In this community they'd write poems to each other and hang them up on the walls everything was immediately communicated. Then they collected poems and did some art work and brought out a sheet called *Califlower* with three other communes and then they just distributed that

They decided on H.P.H. in that they'd build a sweat bath and they sent out notices to neighbouring communes and



friends in the city saying, "It's on this weekend, we're going to build a sweat bath, come up, be in it." They got about fifty people, they organized it a bit, set people to work, some were digging the pit, others went out into the forest and cut these long stake poles they wanted to radiate into the centre, then they lined it all with stones, covered the top and packed mud all over that.

While they were working the musicians were encouraged to play, they organized each other around different functions like this, and they all worked like stink for the whole day and towards sunset they eventually had the whole sweat bath going. They built bonfires and the red hot heated stones and they brought these in on sticks and dumped them in the middle of the place. Then they all stripped off and packed themselves in to this great sweat bath, and brought in the water and threw it on the stones.

Peter Coyote said that there was a fantastic sense of excitement. They created that thing in a day, and there they all were naked and it was pale light outside the sun had gone down, but there was hardly any light inside the thing and they couldn't see each other much, as the people kept throwing the water the steam kept billowing up and flooding the whole place.

There was almost a sense of panic eventually it became suffocating

Then just at the point he thought people would crack there was this heavy breathing and sweatiness, suddenly it was as if everybody's pores opened at once and there was this fantastic smell of humanity.

The last thing I want to touch on is religion. A lot of people in communes go in for various forms of interest in the supernatural and I think there's a fairly good reason for this. It's not that they quite believe it ... there's a lot of interest, for instance, in astrology. I can remember a bloke saying to me "I have fantastic pains in my back

and it's because I was a capricorn ... and cause I have a lousy posture ... There's a lot of this language used, and I'm not sure how much people take it seriously. But if someone's stroking your hand and saying, yes you've got this and you've got that, who cares why they do it? A lot of it is using these things as contact with people, and there are lots of creative things that come out of it.

One bloke told me the story of how his wife was pregnant, and he had to go get a midwife and bring her back to the community. He said he drove off and was driving along the road, anxious, concerned that he get back in time ... driving along this Californian road with huge trees either side silhouetted against the sky, a bright ribbon of light above ... not shedding much light below. His headlights were picking out the curb, and he said it seemed to him as he drove that the whole forces of nature were in fantastic energetic activity. The clouds were shunting across the sky all the time, from left to right, in a purposeful way, glowing at the edges. And as his headlights moved along the road they picked up little animals, chipmonks, gophers, and badgers ... and they were all dashing across from left to right. It was the one direction for the clouds and the animals, and the same sense of purpose.

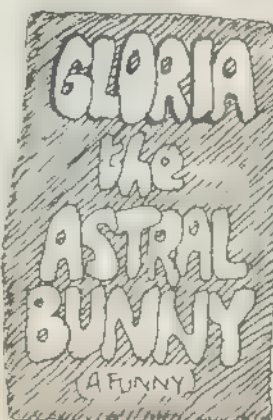
He said he was getting more and more anxious as the car was tearing along, and he came around a

bend, and there in front of him about a hundred yards was a deer standing right in the middle of the road. He slammed on his brakes, and the deer looked absolutely unperturbed ... it just stared at him, with very big brown eyes. He relaxed back in the car and felt all the tension go out of him, and the deer turned and walked very quietly into the forest. He felt the sensation, that that was the natural thing, this deer knew what it was about, nature was in sympathy with him, nature had an ordered urgency, but it was all OK. Deers have their babies in the forest and they manage and that's how his wife would be.

He drove on into the town, and he said as he was coming into the town for the first time a creature moved from the other side, and that was an owl. It flew out of the forest and flew so low that, as it pulled up over his car he heard it hit the car lightly with a muffled noise and flew off. He said at that instant he decided they'd call the child Lowowl

That story was typical of many, and it was half of what it's all about. A sense of belonging to something beyond themselves, and that's religious and creative in a way.

There's a sociology of religion, of how religions come to man Radcliffe Brown, an anthropologist believes religions come into existence by first people have a common sentiment ... someone has died and there's a common



sense of grief. Or there's a flood threatening to overwhelm a whole village and there's a sense of fear. From this common sentiment the attempt to express that sentiment results in activity. If it's a flood coming you feel an urge to stop it, but you can't physically stop it because you're just a single human being, so you make sacrifices. You can create a sense of the flood as having a personality, but it's almost as though you make the sacrifice before you create the belief about some supernatural force. In other words religions are founded on impulsive actions that are then rationalised by belief structures. Then the beliefs create rituals, you go to church for instance, and that in turn creates a common sentiment.

On communities, people then go in for rituals around planting the corn for the next season and that to them heightens the sense of urgency about the growing of the crop... it heightens the experience you have. The beliefs themselves don't matter so much but they have to be there enough to justify the ritual activity. One of the best experiences I had in the States was visiting a group called the Floating Lotus Magic Opera Company who had a session going at night. You'd go to a warehouse they have in San Francisco and there's a little door on the side, and I went in and there's a sort of womblike structure. The whole little corridor going into this thing was lined in black velvet and I felt my way up

this and I opened the door at the end of it, and inside the warehouse was full of people all sitting crosslegged, a lot of them with candles between them and there were music groups scattered around and they had two vast mythical beasts at the end of the hall. They were about twenty feet high, made of paper mache and gold and groups would sing or play guitar and others would sing with them. There was a stillness about the place because after each item there was a great hush then someone would chant "Ommm" and that would ring through the whole place and there'd be the tinkle of a temple bell and then "Ommm" and then silence, and then someone somewhere would start singing again. It was organised by the Floating Lotus Magic Opera Company, but it was all dedicated to various spirits. I don't believe a lot of those people believed in the spirits, or the supernatural, or cosmic forces, but all this was expressing something that made people in common not just for their own sake but for something beyond themselves.

I wrote a letter about it at the time, actually retelling what one bloke told me about a similar experience. He said, "Thousands of freaky people, people in way-out garb, had come together to sing with performers and do their thing, the crescendo of togetherness created a force beyond mere people, beyond the concept of a community, beyond the nation,

beyond the culture, beyond the world. What was being sought was a standard by which to say, this is it, this spontaneous release of energy, this creation of form... this is ultimately good, better than anything material. It had to be beyond man, beyond the right of individual men to approve or disapprove. To be in a sense god given so no-one could deny it. But god in the image of man had no appeal as a source of authority. The source then was cosmic, interplanetary, it was the vast rhythm of the universe, the music of the spheres, all forces acting through man. Man at an ultimate peak expressing those forces. Man expanding. Man on a hillside, man in a group, man in song, man in love".

That sort of thing seems to me the importance of religion, even though I regard myself as an atheist. And that's the sort of thing people, in various ways, are feeling for in communities.

Finally, a couple more quotes, the tensions are there, the problems are there on communities, and other things you can't get anywhere else but on a community, and from the Sunrise Hill community this is what one guy said when it packed up, "the community at Sunrise Hill is over, so we part in sadness. But the good times were wonderful, and I feel the last six months were the greatest of my life." And another one from Cold Mountain farm, the anarchist community that also packed up after about two years,



this woman writes that during the early stages when they were setting up she "felt they were becoming a tribe. With all its imperfections I never felt so all together and good about any group of people. Everything that I did here felt good and meaningful. In the context of this place, of these people who I loved. Up until now, I had known the feeling of being a free individual — I even had a man and a small son with whom I felt free, but now finally I felt myself being fulfilled as part of a free society. In all the different roles one plays with a group of people." Again to here it was an ultimate experience and when it closed and she went back to suburbia those were the richest memories of her life.

QUESTIONS:

What was the reason for the break-up of Cold Mountain farm?

They found they didn't have a lot of the technical knowledge of farming. They talked to the farmers in the area, for instance about their fruit trees. They'd pruned them the wrong way then found out later how they should have done it . . . and the trees got frost-bitten and then they realised they had to plant ahead. The other thing was that they needed a lot more capitalisation to get in a commune in a commercially (valid) way. They had a lot of trouble with winter — they were in New York State where it's pretty cold — and I think that perhaps they would have got on top of it but it just needed longer than they had because they busted up for other reasons.

The other thing is that, I guess that it's very hard to get a proper balance of food in any one community. If you're going to work as a food-producing unit you need to produce one or two types of food and exchange them for others . . .

If you were setting up a commune now and you hoped it would be permanent, how would you go about it?

Well, I'm no more qualified to talk about that than anyone else,

here, but just from living around Carlton I've found that living with people that I work with is fantastically easier although it lacks a certain richness of introducing other attitudes. I'd be very careful to set it up with people I liked and got on with. I'd work from the people and then they would create their own rules and ideas on how the commune would operate.



COMMUNAL LIVING INFORMATION CENTRE

Contact:

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544-0811, Ext. 2965

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Psychology Department (Room
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Melbourne University, 340-6350.

Ian Campbell, Commune
Coffee Lounge, 580 Victoria Street,
North Melbourne Vic. 3051,
309-9310.

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The Modern Utopian, C/- R Fairfield, Tufts U, Box 44 Medford Mass. 02153

Journal of the Communal Movement, London.

a plea from the heart

High Times will be attempting, in future, to cover selected topics that are otherwise ignored by the media. We have special issues planned on radical education, the Australian film industry, dope, Australian poetry, and possibly censorship (if we can get it printed).

Not only do we anxiously await (not to mention crave) letters of any sort from anyone, but also, we're eager to receive manuscripts, tapes or raves on any or all the above topics, and on any others you might think vital and fascinating. Graphics and photos are always welcome too.

Our address, for the moment, remains PO Box 77 Carlton Vic 3053.

To contact High Times by telephone is next to impossible, but you might try Colin James (34 8121) or Bill Robinson (42 1078) in Melbourne and Phillip Frazer (929 0499) in Sydney.

Anything sent to High Times will be treated with the respect it deserves, and we'll do our utmost to return it unharmed if you want.

Meanwhile, if you're happy to remain a reader you might find it's becoming increasingly difficult to buy your copy of HT. This will be specially true if you live in Tasmania or West Australia, where the paper has come under government bans! In South Australia, the newsagents association makes it very difficult to distribute, and everywhere else there are dozens of newsagents who believe that the sale of this magazine will morally degrade the community, or at least morally compromise them individually as purveyors of porn.

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LETTERS

Please send letters to box 77, Carlton, Vic. In fact, please send letters...



Dear Comrades,

A number of Victorian activists, after initial discussions with people in Canberra and Sydney, have decided to advance the idea of organizing a National 'Political festival' to be held in May next year.

The idea, initially conceived as being a large escalation in the Anti-conscription campaign, has been further developed as a result of reflection on the demise of the Moratorium coalition and the lack of interstate communication and solidarity. We see a strong need for national communication, solidarity, and action.

Combined with this, and more important, is the belief that the revolutionary left needs to develop and display an alternative society and culture. We believe that a revolution must be worked for, not waited for. The Canberra Commune will enable an integration of, and interaction between, what is (optimistically) termed the 'Counter Culture' and the more overtly 'political' scene.

Perhaps just as important however, is the action and discussion that will result both before and during the Commune. Out of this it is hoped that a more radical political awareness and program will develop, enabling the Australian left to move away from the issue-oriented politics that have too strongly dominated the scene since the anti-war movement began. It is hoped that the Canberra Commune will strongly attack the many faces of capitalism — not only its exploitative, imperialist, and ecological faces, but also its more subtle cultural, media, and general authoritarian faces.

Obviously no 'program' has been developed yet — this would need to be done at an interstate discussion, and

would have to remain flexible to enable the Commune to govern itself. We hoped that there would be discussions on capitalism, imperialism, ecology, racism, etc., integrated with cultural activities including rock bands, films, theatre and poetry. As well there would be a number of mass actions (marches, rallies, blockades, or whatever). A number of underground draft resisters have indicated their desire to be involved in the Commune, and it is hoped that radical resistance would also be present.

The Commune is basically a chance for people to come together and prove that a free, dynamic, and challenging life-style, based on communal relations between people and on non-authoritarian forms of organization, is practicable and desirable. Such a commune will pose a threat to the establishment by its very existence, by its freedom. We see this hectic 4-day period in Canberra as a new form of political action, where people come to contribute to, and share in, the experiences the Commune creates.

We would like to hear from people regarding the above proposals. We believe that the Canberra Commune is both practicable and politically desirable. However, to be a success, a considerable amount of work will need to be done in all states. In Victoria, Radical Action Movement members have initiated the proposal and, in conjunction with a number of draft resisters and other political activists, have formed a group to begin the necessary organization. Hopefully other states will do the same.

Yours Sincerely,

MELBOURNE CO-ORDINATING
COMMITTEE
CANBERRA COMMUNE
C/- 57 Palmerston St
Carlton Vic 3053
Phone 347-5640

REMEMBER
TO ENABLE INTERSTATE
DISCUSSION AND PLANNING
MEETING IN SYDNEY ON 5th AND
6th OF FEBRUARY, 1972 PLEASE
SPREAD THE WORD TO MANY
OTHERS

Dear High Times,

I've really enjoyed reading HT, it can only be hoped that Aussie apathy doesn't set in and stop you going on to higher things in the future.

By the way, is there any way I can get a subscription to Oz?

Good luck, love and peace,

Sophie

North Carlton

Lots of readers have asked about Oz. You can write to them at 52 Princedale Road, Nottingham Gate, England. You might end up buying a sub, but don't bank on ever receiving them, our customs men are trained to block literature they (McMahon's men that is) don't like.

Dear friends,

Seeing you seem to want to avoid a fixed editorial policy, how about at least settling on some areas that no one else writes about, like some no-bullshit, researched items on Australia's political and economic sell-out to the US of A? Or the medieval forces that run our police departments and most other so-called public services.

Leave the head revolution to us, except perhaps to keep on campaigning for legalisation and exposing the dealers' racket... go out and dig up some shit.

Mike and Jan

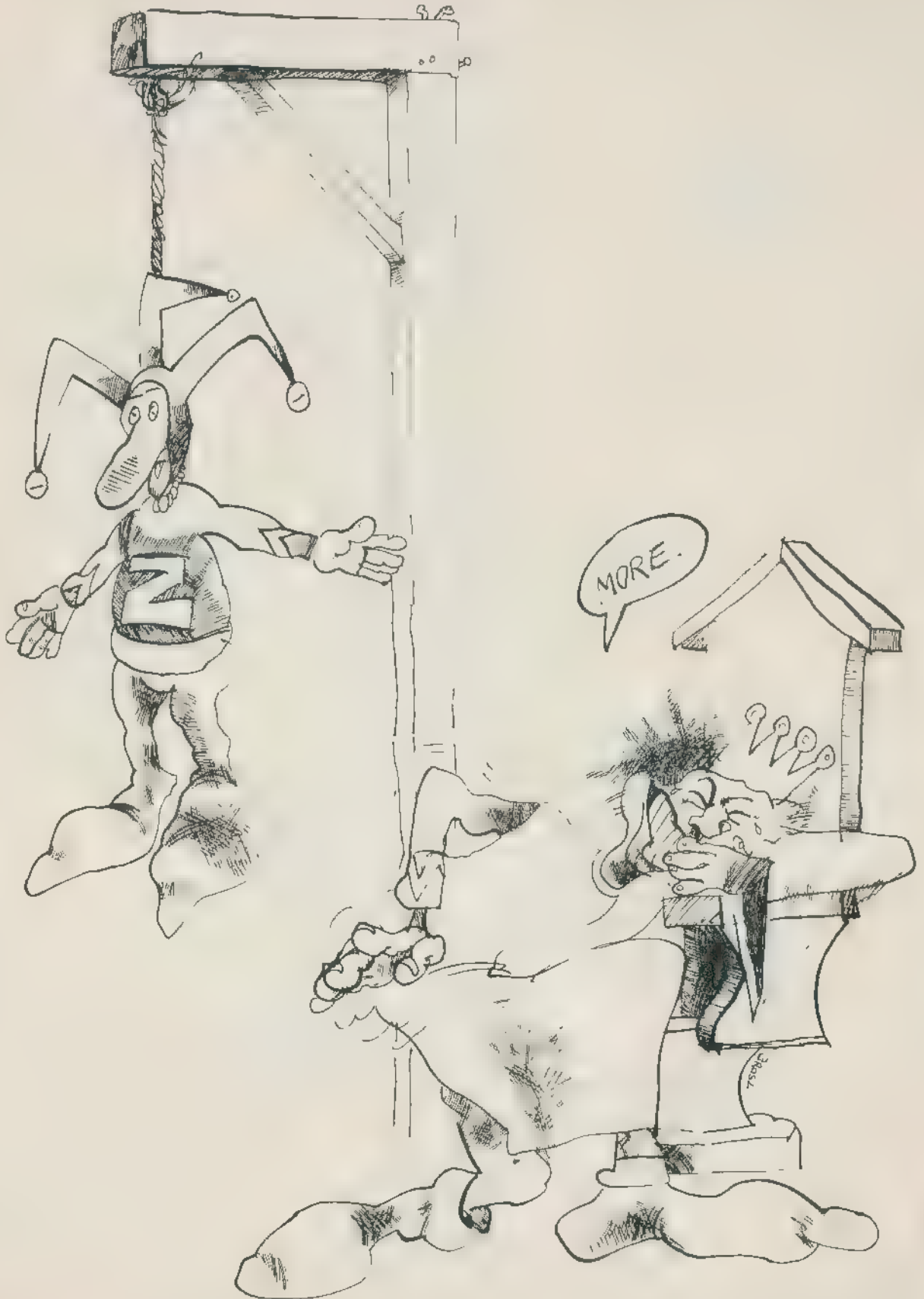
Glenelg SA

Dear HT,

There are several cartoons that appear and reappear in Man magazine, one of them shows a totally dumb blonde bride in some absurd situation with her new husband frothing at the mouth as he prepared to devour her, the other shows a long-haired couple with the gagline tied to the fact that you can't tell which is the boy and which the girl.

High Times runs interminable cartoons that show a bunch of freaks doing nothing but look freaky, with endless captions saying "Wow man" or "I've never been this stoned" etc. etc. Is that what the revolution's about?

The Ferret
Balmain



HOW HARRY HOLDFAST SAVED THE WORKERS

In the 1890's, Melbourne anarchist David Andrade had a communalist vision of the future society.

In his novel *The Melbourne Riots or How Harry Holdfast saved the Workers* he advanced his plans for an Agrarian Utopia. The hero of the novel Harry Holdfast is gaoled on a trumped-up charge following a riot inspired by an agent provocateur Felix Slymer. Freed fifteen years later Harry makes a dramatic appearance before a small group of revolutionaries

(Massed voices sing)

Then hail to the day when the
worker shall say,

"The world 'neath my feet
is mine,

"The wealth in your hands is
the fruit of my toil;

Restore it — it is not thine;

The coal and the metals I bring
from the mine,

The engines I make with my brain,
The homes I have built, and the
clothing I weave

Are all part of Labor's domain."

Chairman: I call on Comrade Harry Holdfast to address the meeting on the all-important question, "How You and I Can Emancipate the Workers."

(Deafening applause)

Harry: I intend to-night, friends, to convey to you the thoughts that I have evolved during fifteen years' confinement in your jail. During the whole of that time I have never ceased to think of the unhappy conditions of those outside it, and

to work out some method by which I could end those conditions if I ever became liberated. At last I have matured my plans, and to-night I shall lay them before you, before I carry them out. (Applause)

Understand I am going to ask you to help me, and I want everyone of you here to lend me a hand; but if you don't — if not one of you assist me, I shall go on carrying it out all the same, and seeking the assistance of more willing co-operators. (Applause)

I am going to ask you to club together your earnings to buy land and machinery and employ each other.

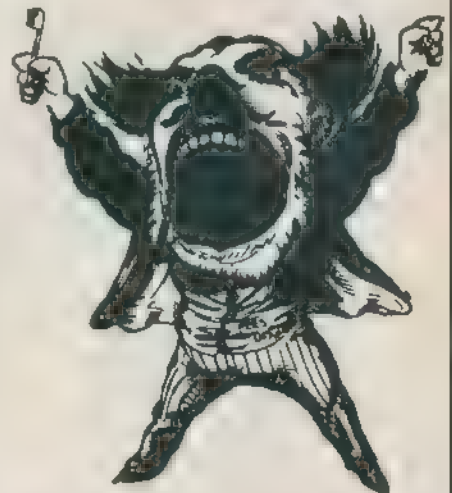
(A voice: We never have any earnings.)

Yes you do or you would all be dead long ago. How many of you could afford to put a pound into the next Melbourne Cup, six months before it is run, if you knew it would win you a thousand pounds?

("Plenty of us".)

Certainly you could. You have but to realize the necessity of a thing and you soon find a way of doing it. Now friends ... club together a stated sum, say ten shillings. If there are a hundred of you that means fifty pounds; a thousand of you, five hundred pounds; and ten thousand of you, five thousand pounds. Now that five thousand pounds employed in securing you what I have suggested would do more good than five hundred thousands of pounds employed in charity or government relief works (hear, hear). After that you can pay a small sum every week, say a shilling until you have paid up some five or ten pounds each. That small ten pounds will gain you not only a house and land free of all liabilities, but it will find you capital to work it, and sufficient food and clothing for you to carry on with until you become absolutely independent. And here is how you go about it. You have clubbed together say the five thousand pounds. With some of that you buy enough land

somewhere in the country and decide amongst yourselves by ballot who shall first go and live on it. You don't need to all go at once, as they did in the previous experiments that failed, because you'd come back again as they did. You wouldn't have enough means to live on. But suppose you sent a hundred of your number. Let them take plenty of tents, food, seed and live stock, and all the other things they require with them. You can easily do this because you have plenty of means. Now there is already a hundred of you on your own lands and out of the crowded city — a hundred less proletaires to compete at the capitalists' feet for a starvation wage. Well you continue to supply them with food, week after week, while they are up there; it doesn't cost much to live rent



free in the country, and your united capital can easily do it without diminishing much. While you are finding these comrades food, they are doing their share towards sustaining you. They are building little homes away up there, so that they can live in them instead of tents; and they are also building others for you; they also dig and prepare the ground so that fruit and vegetables may be planted in it to sustain you and them in the near future, and they erect sheds for the cattle and poultry. After a while they begin to get "the house" ready, as we would say; and you

ballot to select a few more pioneers to go and help them. You might this time send their wives and sweethearts; because you know no community will hold together long if there are no sweethearts there (laughter) the men would soon return to the city with all its sorrows rather than suffer country bachelordom. Then you gradually send more and more of your numbers up there, according to your means, which are constantly being increased by your own weekly contributions, and buy more and more land as you need it. And you keep on doing this until one after another, member after member has gone up to assist in the pioneering work, until at last the whole of you have been absorbed in it, and not one of you remains in Melbourne to struggle with each other for a bare crust of bread".

(Applause)

Chairman: Comrade Holdfast has agreed to answer any questions.

Questioner: But won't some greedy fellows take more land than others, while the rest will not have enough?

Harry: Not so fast, not so fast my friend. Do not conjure up thoughts of legal warfare amongst the members, because it would be one of the last things they would be likely to seek. The Bethel community, who owned their land in common, but used it individually, never had any dispute about the area each one should occupy. Each member, or his family had their own little house, and there wasn't even a fence round it. The Bethel people were happy, contented and prosperous; and although they had not the perfect social organization that might be desired their system of using the land gave every satisfaction that could be desired, and showed to all who want to live a noble life, where there are no such things as landed proprietors and rack-rented tenants, that that life can only be attained when the land is as free as the air, and no one has the right to own any of it, but each one has the right to use as much as he requires. Now

that is the grand lesson Communism has taught us — that the natural resources of nature should be absolutely free to all. That is the lesson to be learned from its successes. But we know that all experiments in Communism have sooner or later failed and we have to learn the reason of its failure. Communism did good when it secured the common use of natural wealth NOT produced by the efforts of human labour. That is the rock on which communism has always foundered and which its unfortunate wrecked crews have forsaken, preferring to struggle in the maelstrom of capitalism. Many a good endeavour has been spoilt owing to this one serious economic defect, many a brilliant enthusiast has been turned into a disheartened pessimist through witnessing the failure that inevitably follows such a rash denial of the right of the worker — the right to the product of his own work. In every community there are apt to be some idlers, and the only way to create idlers is by making it possible for an idler to live — a thing he can only do at the expense of the worker. Thus it is that in the communist experiments, the hard-worker has had to see the non-worker enjoying the fruits of others' toil."

(Applause fade out)

After years of attempting to persuade others to join his scheme Harry Holdfast succeeds and the first settlement is established. The group succeeds beyond its wildest dreams.

"The Social Pioneers now increased their share capital indefinitely, and hundreds of thousands joined them to enjoy their many advantages. Mortgaged estates were bought up everywhere, thus benefiting both the mortgagor and the Society. They bought tracts of land in all parts of the colony — in country, suburb and city — and immediately employed their members upon it. Branches were opened in the adjoining colonies, and the lands there treated in a similar manner.

The movement soon spread to England, Europe, America, Africa and even Asia, and the workers of all countries soon began to forget that they had ever been divided into nations, for they were all becoming Social Pioneers, and realized they were all common brothers in humanity."

Andrade himself failed to emulate Harry. Throughout the nineties he attempted to gain supporters for a scheme along the lines of the Social Pioneers — but with little success.

As the century drew to a close conditions improved and the anarchist movement dwindled. Many of the rebels of the nineties lost their revolutionary ideals. Dwyer suffered the final indignity of being refused a job in the Commonwealth Public Service. Andrews became the fairly conservative editor of the Victorian Labor party journal "The Tocsin". Redbeard took ship back to the United States and disappeared into Mexico at the same time as the writer Ambrose Bierce, giving rise to the rumour that he and Bierce were one and the same person.

Only David Andrade remained unshaken in his anarchist beliefs and his bookshop continued to function well on into the twentieth century.

The anti-parliamentary attitudes of the anarchists re-appeared with the birth of the IWW — the International Workers of the World, during the first world war. But the dream of an agrarian utopia had to wait even longer for resuscitation. One wonders how many of those who identify with the hippy sub-culture or counter-culture who look to rural communes for the answer are aware that in the 1890's J.A. Andrews was advising those young people who wished to be free to flee the cities and establish themselves in free communities in the bush. On his last record Bob Dylan, sometime spokesman for today's youth sang ... (Cut to Dylan singing)

"Build me a cabin in Utah."

EONS

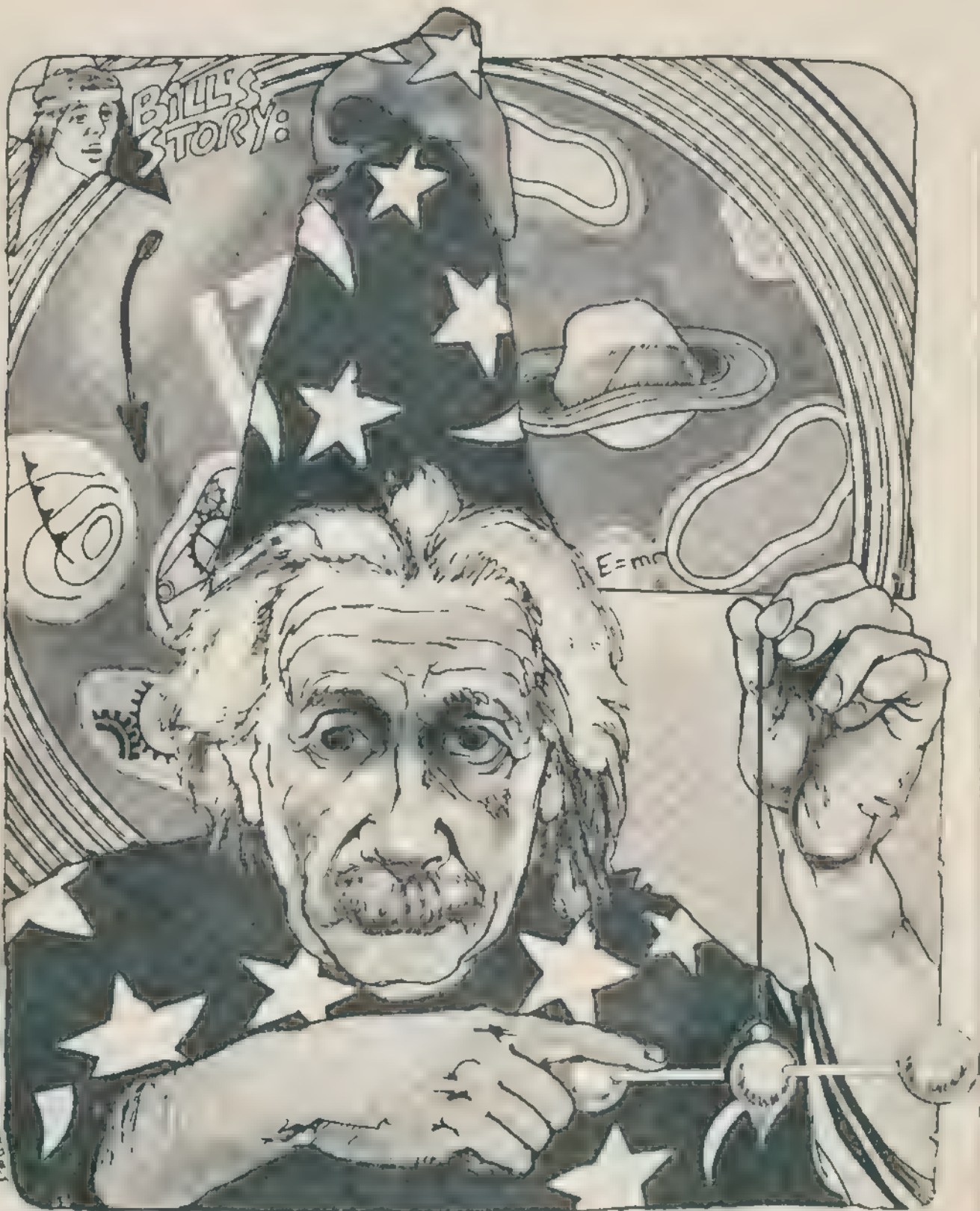
BELIEVE IT OR NOT...

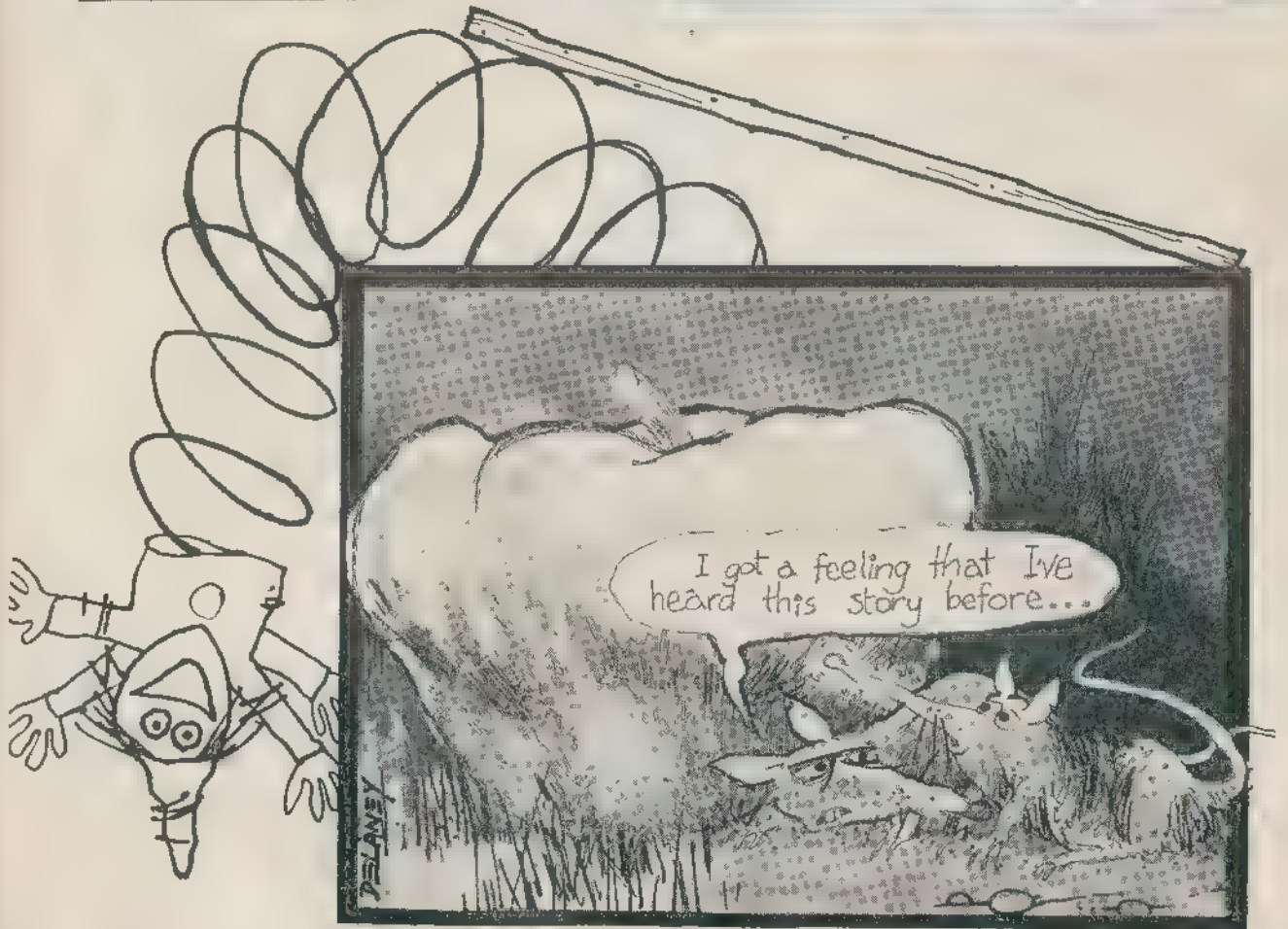
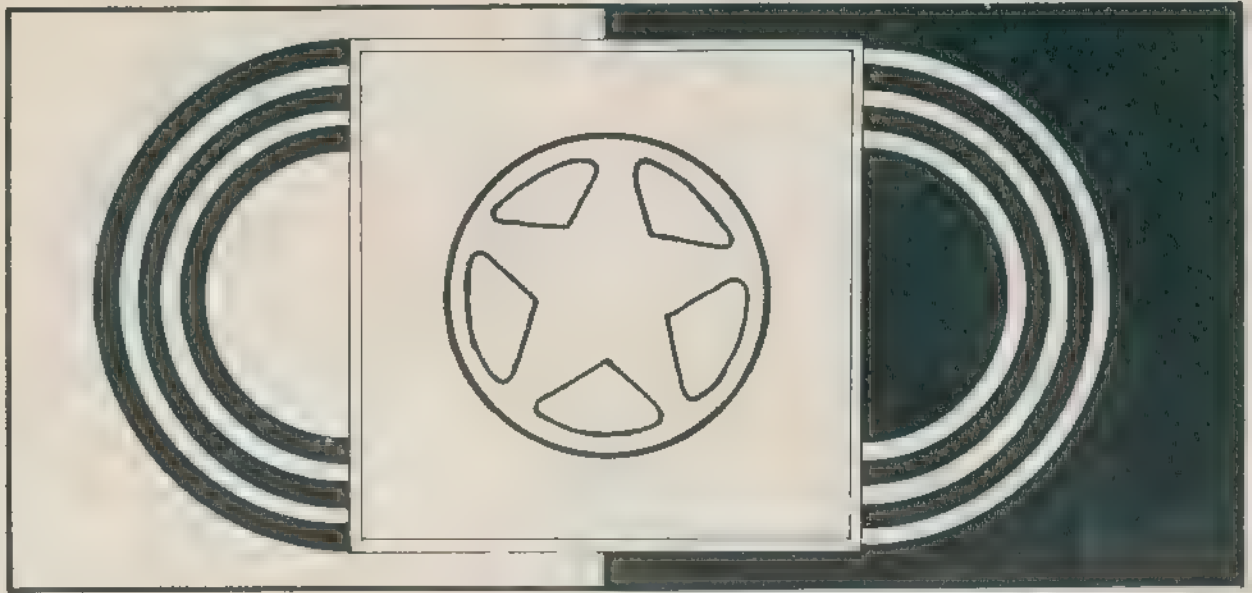
---well known head,
William Peake, claims that he slipped
through a dimension gap, previously
unknown to man, into a world of
multi-dimensional "minds", as he later
called them. Unaffected by the
trip, Will explained that the freak
accident occurred while he and
two friends were conducting
scientific investigation into the
absorbtion rate of the human
brain-cell.

But let Billy tell the story his way...

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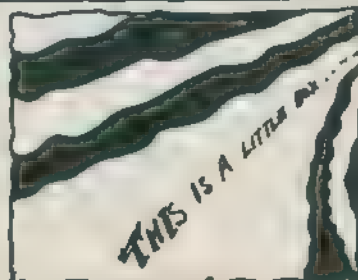
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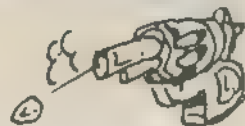
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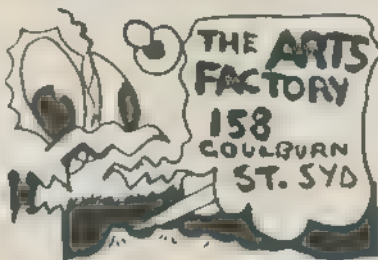


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Notes from Rainbow Farm

The following report is an account of the attempts of Rainbow Farm, a commune on the Eastern seaboard, to get themselves through the harsh winter months and the early stages of their life together.

AFTER THE WINTER, THE BROWN muddy ground looked defeated and dead, incapable of supporting life, beaten finally by five months of snow in the cruelest season of the century. It was late in April before we could walk in the fields back of the 200-year-old farmhouse (lately and somewhat haphazardly refurbished) in which we had lived out the winter: and for two weeks or more after that, the mud was almost as thick as the snow had been. During most of May, we burned the last of our winter's wood in the Ashley stove every night, and every drizzle threatened to become a spring snowstorm.

What first came through the winter's snow was not a crocus or a hemlock top, but the right arm-rest of an old gray overstuffed chair we had left upturned under an apple tree in early December. Then, through the kitchen window, we saw the top of an old cement mixer that had been irretrievably locked in the snow. Soon old rakes, buckets and sections of stove-pipe began turning up. The winter had been confining in many ways, but the reappearance of these forgotten possessions made our own long snowy spell in Vermont seem more of an imprisonment than we had noticed at the time

[THE WINTER'S TALE]

WHEN THE SNOW STARTED falling in November, six of us were living here under an uneasy truce: friends in a house more than a family in its home. The permanent collection of people had settled out from the summer's bunch of crash-

ers without particular plan; most of us had not determinedly come to the country; we had simply stayed.

As the snow level rose, our world became increasingly small. The road periodically disappeared, then reappeared, in a new course according to the whims of the town snowplow. Much of every day was spent pushing by muscle or pulling by Jeep our own cars or those of our visitors—mostly neighboring communards, with the usual assortment of barely ambulatory vehicles. Half of our house was closed for the winter (the rooms with no insulation or heat), and on the coldest days, when it was 20 below, we stayed huddled together around the two stoves. We got to know each other some, and we watched the icicles grow.

We also got to know our firewood. We had cut it all by hand (with a small chainsaw and a two-man crosscut), hauled it from the woods to various collecting stacks, chopped it into usable chunks and threw it into the fires. Almost all of the wood in the first year on the farm was of dead or fallen trees (much of it blighted elm—the hardest to split), and not all of it burned very well. One old oak seemed to be composed of negative wood: the brighter it burned, the more it seemed to draw heat from every corner of the room.

The sun grew distant and passed by us only briefly. We fed our fires and ourselves, talked, and sat watching the snowy fields, like voyagers on an ancient ship, pushing deeper and deeper into the Arctic. The winter finally began to define us. Locked in by the snow, what visitors we received sometimes overwhelmed us, or we overwhelmed them. There were old friends from former lives, and new ones from familiar and unfamiliar places. We talked about revolution, and, although we felt ourselves to be part of the Movement, we were at a loss to say where we were on the continuum of

politics, between communal togetherness and action in the streets. We were intensely involved this winter (as were many people in the cities) with what someone euphemistically called "the politics of personal liberation"; but, although we often felt that the revolution was in our kitchen as much as in any other place, we also knew that it was in those other places, and we were sure we'd find ourselves in Washington in May.

Since it was our first winter—or maybe because we are who we are—not much went smoothly. The wind blew the heat out of the house; one of the woodsheds collapsed under the snow, burying five cord of cut logs; axe handles broke every other day; the chickens stopped laying. We got into endless uncollective rounds of messing up and cleaning up the house, scooping up piles of dog and cat shit, and hassling about money. We struggled happily and unhappily about our differences in age and experience, male and female roles, gayness and straightness, powertripping and dependency. There were wonderful times when we skied or snowshoed across the vast snowfields, or found calm ways of being together and feeling good. In March the snow was still high, but the birds began coming back and the dogs began going out, and winter, which had been an almost human presence, began moving away. We felt that it had been a seventh member of our commune, and we had struggled with it not to triumph or defeat, but to some new understanding of who we are and what in the world we're doing at the end of a dirt road beneath three hills in Vermont.

[THE WAY WE LIVE NOW]

THERE IS A LIST TACKED to the wall in the kitchen:

Morning Work.

Feed and water: pigs, goat, dogs, cats, chickens, bees (until they get it on themselves)

Collect eggs

Water seedlings in flats

Empty trash and compost

Wash dishes and cleanup kitchen

Fire up cook-stove, chop and carry in wood, empty ashes

Put records back in alphabetical order.

That all gets done, usually, by the first person up, while others sleep and hope it will all be finished by the time they get going.

There is another list with projected plans for the (short) building and growing season:

Build dog pen

Clear old barn site and build barn

Reconstruct stone walls

Finish sauna

Finish attic rooms

Convert woodshed to workshop and build new woodshed

Get in winter's wood

Do planting, etc. etc.

Put clapboarding on outside wall of kitchen

Raise X thousands of dollars.

Since the list went up several weeks ago, only the kitchen clapboarding has been completed; other projects are underway on the ground, or in our heads. The dog pen, for instance, is finished in everything but the fencing (\$150 worth of Sing-Sing quality walls) and our three big dogs will soon move from their solitary confinement on chains in the yard to a brand new detention camp. The dogs roamed free for most of the fall and winter. Then, when the winter was almost over, they ran and mortally wounded a pregnant doe, and as a pack they became dangerous to wild and domestic animals. They have behaved badly: charges against them now stand at murder of one kitten, chickenslaughter in the second degree, deerslaughter in the first degree, conspiracy to kill more deer, attempted murder of a goat (two overt acts), conspiracy to do in two

guinea heps, and common nuisance howling at the home of a neighboring psychiatrist with a bitch in continual heat. Though we are very much (maybe too much) into our dogs, we can't deal very well with their pack instincts, which now include almost daily fights as the dog lowest in the hunting order challenges the one above him for rank.

When the pen is finished, we'll begin work on the barn. Like archeologists on a dig, we are excavating the ancient site of a barn which burned down long ago. We'll rebuild its stone foundation, level the ground enclosed and raise a new building according to the old dimensions. It would be cheaper to tear down and haul away materials from an old barn in the neighborhood than to buy new lumber; and we may try to make our own beams from available timber on our property, or from land we're clearing (with help from another commune) on the site of a disgusting ski resort about 30 miles from here. There may be enough wood there for our winter heating needs, but it hurts us too much to participate in the rape of Vermont.

It still amazes us that as much gets done as *does* get done; by choice and inclination, work is very loosely organized and the days are structured subtly in our heads and not in formal ways. We are all middle-class freaks, with the predictable attitudes about work, and we have found that it is not only the Man's work that alienates us. Tensions arise over sex roles in work, competence and incompetence, goal-orientation and process-orientation. We're alternately lazy and compulsive, over-achieving and bored. Some projects are fun and rewarding: we make our own home brew (with malt, water, yeast, a handful of rice and a touch of coconut) and our first batch of dandelion wine is sitting in our "brewery" corner by the cook-stove. The garden is the best work of all: we have plowed, harrowed and tilled more than half an acre, and the rows are filling up with an enormous

assortment of vegetable seeds and seedlings that may or may not be ready to eat by the time the short growing season (120 days, maybe) ends. We'll freeze and can as much as we need to get through the winter with as little dependency on the A&P as possible.

[ALL IN A SUMMER SEASON]

IT'S HARD FOR ANY ONE OF US to believe that the green expanses of field and forest in our valley were white and barren less than a month ago. Spring exploded with unexpected extravagance, and life forced its way through the land with a natural poetry that put the things we read in school to shame. But with the buds came the first summer trippers, and the rumors about the "Vermont summer" with an invasion of city freaks is fairly frightening. It's hard to believe that the existing space can happily accommodate the transient-thousands that may be coming. But we were transients last year, too, and it's strange to feel proprietary about a place that only tentatively has accepted us.

Our friends are mostly like ourselves: urban dropouts of one, two or three years' duration in country communes. We've become close to only a few "local" young people, friendly with several more and at odds with one or two. We learn as much as we can from the farmers and their children and from communards with more experience; for the rest, it's trial and a great deal of error, and gleanings from the new cash crop of hippie fix-it, good-life books. We know we're no experts, and we know that there's more to the good life than brewing dynamite dandelion wine.

LIVING OUR LIVES COMMUNALLY is a choice that we once made and now cannot abandon. We live with the exhilarations and the ambiguities of the style. The ideal of sturdy pioneers living on the land to escape the city's "values" rubs against

the reality of our individual needs. We brought our dogs, our stereos, our rugs and our political posters; we left behind the possibilities of tropical fish, American Express visits, Playboy Magazine, ranchhouses and 2.4 kids. We're neither political heroes nor rugged vagabonds, famous farmers nor foot-loose freaks.

One day during the winter, Great Aunt Beatrice came here to visit her grandniece, who is in our family; she stayed for a week. She is 40 years older than the oldest "young" person here. We didn't need to change our style while she was here: we took our communal saunas, kept our doors open, did our usual things that might freak out uptight parents. Aunt Bea was not freaked. For a while, we entertained the illusion of a world without differences of age or class, sex or education, parentage or childhood, politics or experience. On the last day of Aunt Bea's visit, a great many visitors came to the farm; one thing led to another, and we found ourselves partying on the roof of the porch under a hot spring sun as the snow melted beneath us. We had forgotten that Aunt Bea was in the kitchen, until we saw her start down the path to the cars, her cane slipping in the soft snow. A friend from her town in Connecticut was driving her back home. She waved to us on the roof, and we climbed down to wish her goodbye. We were embarrassed at the sudden scene, but when her car pulled away we went back up to the roof and didn't think about her again that day.

WE MADE IT THROUGH last winter believing somehow that Paradise would unfold around us with the green leaves. We were wrong. The energy we had for building, gardening and working together is being dissipated in worrying about the bills and the problems we have with each other. The garden has more weeds than vegetables, and some of the plants have been killed by the remains

of last year's broad-leaf herbicide. The barn we dreamed about remains unstarted. We have endless group meetings where we try to discuss our problems, but many things have been left unresolved. Some of us think that more talking together will help us. Some of us think that fewer meetings and more playing together would be better. But here is one thing we all agree on.

Dandelion Wine

Collect a lot of dandelion flowers (about 5 gallons to make 10 gallons of wine)

Cover with an equal amount of water

Soak for 9-11 days

Strain out the flowers

Add yeast (3 cakes for up to 10 gallons)

Wait until it doesn't fizz anymore

Bottle and cork (check corks in a week, burp the bottles so if they are still working they won't explode—we lost a lot that way)

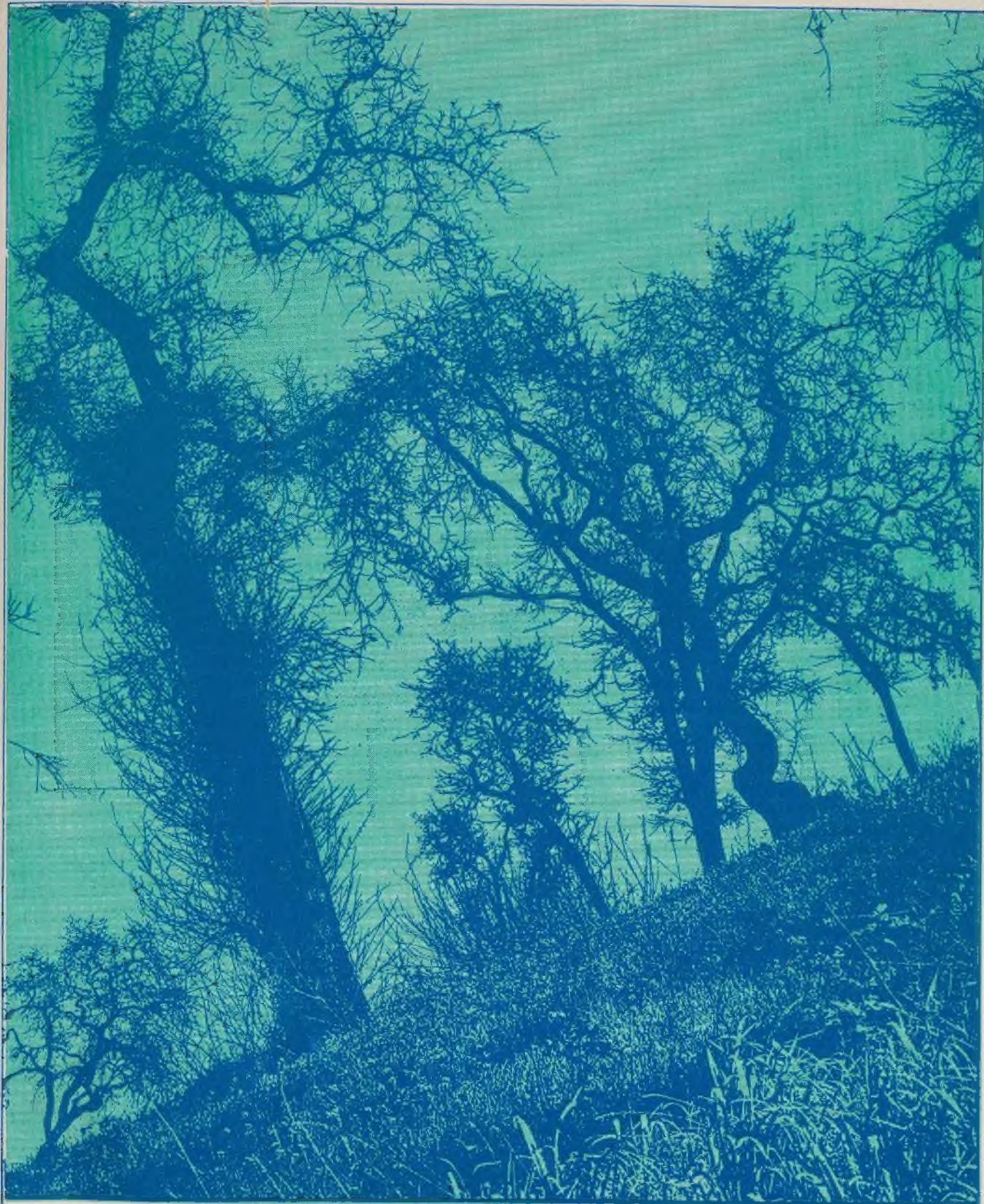
Store for as long as possible. Open after a heavy collective meeting

The farm is not yet owned by us but borrowed from a friend whose plans to live here had changed. The cost of maintenance—food and building supplies, as well—has been unequally shared, with one person responsible for a disproportionate amount. If we were the good communists we would like to become, this would make no difference. It is not our money, after all, but our families', and most of it is rotten. land speculation, an overseas chemical factory, drug advertising, media empires, in some cases outright crookery, even in the system's own terms. If our parents acquired their wealth at a high price to themselves, to the rest of the world, and to us, why can't we transcend it, use it freely to live a life that is less harmful to our fellow man and possibly, in the long run, revolutionary? It is beginning to seem to us that we cannot. We are not just children of capitalism but its prisoners. Several things happen, all of which we hate. The people who pay

the bills come to feel that others are here for the security of their money. Those who contribute less feel indignant, trapped by an internal Calvinism that consciously was long ago overcome: I work for my money, why can't they? We scrape together money to pay bills collectively, while people clutch onto their extraordinary private travel machines (among them a Porsche, a Land Rover and a Honda 450). We scrounge \$3.00 by laboring outside the farm, then buy Lido Cookies and plastic pies. Someone is forced by conscious and subtle pressure to take an ill-paid job which keeps her away from the farm: it is impossible for the rest of us to feel good about our friend working for \$30 a week when there is money all around us.

It took me many months of waylaid fantasies to believe that I was just as responsible financially to the group as the guy who was one hundred times richer. In my simpler phase I was sure that, if he just gave it all to the farm, it would bond us together in an unpossessive way. Sad, but untrue. The fact that he's spent twelve times more than the rest of us has created enormously more complicated roles than the normal "workin' for The Man" kind of scene.

So I guiltily took a job for The Man, and everyone thought it was absurd and I knew that things were getting chaotic on a philosophical level. But when the restaurant manager told me I was the most mature applicant for his job so far, I believed him and became a waitress serving fancy French cuisine. I took an instant liking to the toothless, baggy-panted dishwasher, and he promised to save me all the scraps for our pigs, dogs, friends, whatever. The bartender was a woman who reminded me of Ethel Merman. She talked about local communists but thought the ones in our town were harmless since they had no connection with the Russian universities. She and the chef gave me a lot of support in my new experience, but the man-



Barro Colorado



ager treated me like a mindless slave. He quizzed me about how the tables were numbered and what the day's specials were. I was fascinated by him in a bitter way, and tried to remember the pose of sophisticated determination that has gotten me through every nasty situation I've been in since the age of two.

The customers either bored me or scared me, and on some occasions we seemed, humorously, equal. My first servees were four nuns who all ordered the exact same thing. They were sweet, and laughed when I poured coffee in their half-filled teacups. After that I thought I could learn good things from the people who came in, but, when the nuns left and the big executives arrived, I could see that it wouldn't be true. It was impossible to talk about women's liberation, and I was acting the epitome of everything I'd hated for the last two years. No one believed me when I said I lived with my family on a farm. One Saturday night, two drunk, slick young tyrants made snide remarks about my clothes (I couldn't afford a uniform) and my conversation with a woman at the bar. They criticized the fact that I was wearing white canvas sandals with black opaque stockings under a low-cut Chinese print dress. I admit I looked a little bizarre, and I don't understand quite why I overprotected my legs and overexposed my cleavage, but for them that wasn't the issue. They figured it was the way all Lesbians dressed, and watched carefully to see how I and my "girlfriend" of five minutes were getting along. She was just a girl waiting to meet her date, and I had to serve her. But they had me flustered. Their mocking questions made me want to spit in their faces and throw food all over the floor. At home I began to feel the same way.

The job became increasingly alienating to me, and was the source of my two greatest paranoias. One was that I felt powerless at work and, because of be-

ing away so much, equally powerless at home. The other was that I could have been living anywhere and doing the same thing. It was fun to feed the pigs those puffed french-fried potatoes and fun to feed half-eaten filets to the dogs. But it was little consolation to know that it was all for the sake of a \$30 a week contribution to the farm. The boundless energy I once felt toward the farm and the family I love was zapped by the contradictions and our swirl of problems. Before too long, I quit.

When our waitress returned to the farm, we felt relieved. But desperate to find a way to pay our bills and to equalize our contributions, we reached for another solution: collective work. We thought (and still hope) that we might find work enough for ourselves and for neighboring communes, so we organized a tentative local labor pool, advertised in the local ad-weekly, and waited. On the first weekend we got our first calls: for roto-tilling gardens and mowing lawns. It was late in the season for roto-tilling and the people wanted it done fast. Well, the roto-tiller broke, the trailer to the jeep broke, parts were not available, and it looked bad. Borrow . . . we borrowed a roto-tiller, squeezed it into the jeep and took off. After one week of working other people's gardens—trying at the same time to work on our own sex role-playing and not let the men do all the roto-tilling—we found we had made barely enough to make a dent in our bills.

So far we have found some means to do it (gifts from mamas or friends, our own hidden caches), but it feels neither right nor secure, and now so much is unclear.

WHAT'S GOING ON? It seems that we've re-created what we all hated in the society we came from: among other things, a desire for conformity. Sometimes the changes we ask each other to go through are not the changes that would free that person but changes that make it easier for

us to identify with one another. It doesn't work. It only creates extreme paranoia—a word we now use freely to describe the depth of the mutual mistrust we have discovered. Part of our problem may be that the space we live in is so small that we are literally grafted onto each other's lives. Or, as someone unaptly put it, we want to have squatters' rights in each other's souls.

We've talked about our dislike of closed, monogamous relationships, and suddenly we think we've found a monogamous couple in our midst. We've talked about new ways of raising children here who are the sole responsibility of their mother and a noisy annoyance to some of the rest of us. We know we want to break down work roles, and still the women generally take responsibility for the kitchen and the men for work outside the farm. We think we are being open and flexible, but the woman who has just joined us, whose ideas and experiences are slightly different, dreamed that our farm was like an army and that we had cut off all her hair.

RAMPARTS

High Times

This issue comes to you from the hands, heads and feet of: Phillip Frazer, Chris Hector, Mark Delaney, Macy McFarland (and her little people), Bob Daly, Chris Grosz, the Radical Action Movement in Melbourne who lent the tapes, and all those associated with the Communal Living conference.

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KINGDOM COME

PHEW, A WHOLE
FIVE DAYS I'VE
WORKED TOWARDS
CREATION OF
THE WORLD
AND WHAT HAVE
I TO SHOW...?



HEAVENS,
EARTH
AND SEA.
FIVE DAYS
TO MAKE
A PLANET
AND A FEW
THINGS...



AND TOMORROW,
THE SIXTH
DAY- WHAT
ARE YOU
GONNA
CREATE
NEXT?



I DUNNO,
I MIGHT
GET STONED
AND THINK
ABOUT IT.



THIS SOUNDS
LIKE THE
START OF
SOMETHING
BIG!

